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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN OKLAHOMA

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculties  
of the  
Graduate School of Arts and Literature  
in Candidacy for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
(Department of Education)

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By  
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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN OKLAHOMA

### Introduction.

A number of elements seem to combine in making the study of the history of education in Oklahoma profitable. Geographically, the state occupies middle ground between the north and the south on the one hand, and the east and the west on the other. These four sections are widely separated as regards educational tradition; Oklahoma inherits from all and stands ready to give the benefit of her experience to all sections of the country. Her experiences in education, as in government, promise to be interesting and valuable. The open-hearted, humanitarian motives of the south, inclined just enough toward the tutorial and private school ideal to be very much concerned about the individual child; the conservative eastern element, slow to take up the new, but so safe and reliable in many of the old ideas that a new country needs; the thrifty north, bent on having the best, but at the same time insisting on getting it's money's worth; finally, the open-handed, generous, "booster spirit" of the west, which at times overrules the conservatism of the east and the thrift of the north and compels the public to expend large sums for the benefit of an institution which appeals to them as public education does:- all these elements are at work building up the school system of Oklahoma; a system, which may finally combine the best traditions of all sections, just as the population of the state is made up from every other state in the Union.



One of the most interesting considerations in the development of this new state has been the education of the Indians. Approximately one third of all the red men in the United States are located in Oklahoma. These are slowly but certainly and successfully being amalgamated with the white race, largely through education, which has been continually emphasized by various agencies, including the missionaries, independent tribal efforts, federal and state authorities. The passing of control of education from one agency to another and situations arising in connection with each change are interesting.

A third element to consider is the extreme newness of the country. Although the Indians came to eastern Oklahoma as early as 1820, the history of the white man really begins with the opening of 1889; but twenty-five years ago. Oklahoma has been a state only since Nov. 16, 1907. Discouraging educational traditions, which so often block the wheels of progress, are practically unknown in this state. Of course, this fact often opens the way to the new and untried, and often results in the wrong course being pursued for a time. Mistakes are to be expected and should cause us no particular anxiety. What we are concerned about, is the attitude of the public toward correcting such wrong tendencies. Oklahoma, being so new, is being closely scrutinized by other states, and not without severe criticism. The radical nature of the constitution of the new state at once challenged a great deal of political opposition, which, of course, shall concern us only to the extent to which the schools were affected

From the mass of educational legislation then, tribal,





territorial and state, Congressional acts pertaining to education, and the general activity displayed by all agencies in the founding of schools, it begins to appear very probable that a plan of education is being evolved, which combines a great many of the best elements in our modern conception of a well administered state system. Just what these elements are, when and under what conditions they arose, and an estimate of their total value as displayed by present conditions and present sentiment, it shall be the aim of this investigation to determine.

There are essentially two important dates in Oklahoma history; "opening day", April 22, 1889, and "Statehood day", Nov. 16, 1907. Since these dates mark approximately the limits of important educational periods, I have utilized them as convenient points for the division of this thesis. For our purpose then the period from the earliest times to 1889 may be termed the "Pre-territorial Period"; from 1889 to 1907 the "Territorial Period"; and the period from 1907 to the present, the "Statehood period".



### Pre-territorial Period.

The Indian is the central figure of this period. Not primarily the blanket Indian, although they were present in large numbers, but the so called five civilized tribes took up their residence very early in the eastern part of the state. The first to come were a small number of Cherokees, who sought the country voluntarily because of the encroachments of the whites upon their lands in Georgia, North Carolina and east Tennessee. Following this the rest of the tribe signed a treaty with President Jackson in 1830, relinquishing their eastern lands and accepting certain tracts in Indian Territory. After a terrible march they arrived, between the years 1832 and 1838. The Choctaws and Chickasaws from Alabama and Mississippi were removed to the territory between the years 1840 and 1845. The Creeks from Alabama were removed about the same time, although some had come as early as 1830. The Seminoles came after the war in Florida in 1845.<sup>1</sup>

One of the best accounts of conditions regarding education during the unsettled times of these various Indian removals is contained in the published report of Isaac McCoy, a Baptist missionary to the Indians in the early days.<sup>2</sup> In the year 1837 he gives the situation for each tribe of which a summary follows. Among the Choctaws there were nine schools supported by the government. The Presbyterian mission supported

1. Abel, Anna H., The History of Events Resulting in Indian Consolidation West of the Mississippi.

2. McCoy, Isaac., Annual Register of Indian Affairs Within the Indian Territory., 1837.





schools at Bathabara, Wheelock, Clear Creek, Bethel, Lukfoata and Pine Ridge, with a total attendance of about two hundred. Tuition and books were free and the Choctaw language expressed in English letters was used. The Methodist mission had one station at Little River where a government teacher was supported. The Baptists supported four small stations where some teaching was done. Among the Cherokees, the Presbyterians had the celebrated Dwight Mission, which was founded in 1829, and was situated about twenty miles west of Arkansas and twelve miles north of the Arkansas river. This station consisted of thirty buildings, supported a male school of thirty and a female school of thirty two pupils. Others were the Fairfield station on Sallisaw creek, with fifty pupils, founded in 1829, and the Forks of the Illinois station founded in 1830. Among the Cherokees, hymns, Scripture tracts, the Book of Jonah, a spelling book and other texts were prepared in the Indian language, based on the alphabet of George Guess, commonly known as Sequoyah. A methodist mission, established in 1831 by the Arkansas Conference, supported two schools in English. The baptists had one station among the Cherokees but it was closed during this year. (1837) Among the Creek Indians there was little done, two small stations of the baptist church being reported.

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McCoy also gives some interesting facts regarding the amount of government support which was provided among these same tribes. (1) An annual appropriation of \$10,000.00 was partially applied in Indian Territory. (2) For the Cherokees,

I. McCoy, Isaac., Annual Register of Indian Affairs Within the Indian Territory.



an annual appropriation of \$2000.00 was made for ten years beginning with the year 1823, and a further sum of \$1000.00 was voted for the purpose of providing a printing press for the nation. Later, in 1835, \$150,000.00 was added to a previous grant of \$50,000.00, making a permanent fund of \$200,000.00.

(3) The Creeks received a grant of \$3000.00 annually for twenty years in 1832, and \$1000.00 additional in 1833. It was

estimated that this could educate eighty children in a boarding school, or three hundred twenty where supported by the parents.

(4) For the Choctaws, the government agreed, in 1830, to educate forty youths. \$2500.00 annually for twenty years was also appropriated, and an unexpended balance of \$25,000.00 was applied by the government in building twelve schools.

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An estimate of the number of Indians present in the territory in 1837, places the Creeks at 4000; Cherokees, 16,000; Chickasaws, 5400; Choctaws, 3500; Seminoles, 2600. This was, however, before the larger bands of the later removals had arrived. There were also an almost countless number of smaller tribes scattered over the country, for many of which the government made provision for education. The missionaries also ministered to these faithfully at their smaller stations. During these unsettled times, when the Indians were undergoing such terrible hardships incident to their removal from the preserves in the east, the co-operation of the government agents and the missionaries seems to have been a live force in establishing early systems of education, some of which have endured to the present day.

I. McCoy, Isaac., Annual Register of Indian Affairs  
Within the Indian Territory.





Very soon after taking possession of their new lands, the five civilized tribes set up governments modeled after the United States, and, among other things, established a very efficient system of schools. Since these school organizations practically controlled education both among the Indians and the whites for a great many years, and still affect educational practice in eastern Oklahoma to a large extent, any comprehensive statement of educational development in Oklahoma must give large space to them. I have selected the Cherokee tribe, which is the largest in number, as a type suitable for closer scrutiny. The history of this tribe is interesting for two further reasons; first, a member of this tribe, George Guess, commonly known as Sequoyah, gave to the Cherokee nation its alphabet, the only Indian alphabet in history; second, all tribal government and authority of the Cherokees was dissolved but a few days ago, June 30, 1914. These civilized Indians will now take their places as individual citizens in the state of Oklahoma.

As previously indicated, the Cherokees had a form of government modeled after that of the United States, with a Principal Chief and tribal legislature or council. The council usually met once each year and transacted business much as the ordinary legislature does. The Principal Chief from 1828 to 1866 was John Ross, whose name has become immortal among his people. A glance at the tribal laws of the Cherokees throws considerable light on educational progress among the Indians. The Cherokee constitution, adopted Sept. 6, 1839, contains this interesting statement, - "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government, the preservation of liberty, and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of educa-





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tion shall forever be encouraged in this nation." A brief abstract of the legislative acts relating specifically to education follows.

Dec. 16, 1841. "An act relative to the public schools. Be it enacted by the National Council:- That for the purpose of placing the means of a common education within the reach, as nearly as possible, of every person---there be established-- thirty two common schools located as follows," Sequoyah district, three schools; Illinois district, three schools; Canadian district, three schools; Tahlequah district, three schools; Going Snake district, four schools; Flint district, three schools; Delaware district, four schools; Saline district, three schools; Coe-we-skoo-we district, three schools. One school was also to be located at the Moravian mission. A superintendent of schools, to be elected every two years by the national council, was to appoint a board of three directors for each school. The superintendent was also authorized to locate two colored schools. Among the general duties of the superintendent we find that he is to provide comfortable schools, to visit all schools at least twice each year and make an annual report to the council through the principal chief. There is a penalty of \$25.00 attached for neglecting to make this report. The local board of directors is to superintend the erection of buildings, hire teachers and visit each school once in three months. The school year was divided into two terms. It was

1. Oklahoma Red Book, vol I, p 207, Cherokee Constitution, Art. VI, Sec. 9. Compare N. W. Ordinance 1787.
2. Laws of the Cherokee Nation, 1839-1867, Art. VI, "Schools, Mission Stations and means of education" pp 61 to 69.





determined that a school should contain not less than twenty-five, nor more than sixty pupils. \$200.00 was appropriated for the enforcement of the act.

Nov. 24, 1842. An act granting the moravians permission to establish a school and mission within the reservation.

Nov. 2, 1849. An act providing for the appointment of an examining board of three, to be named by the principal chief. In addition to the scholastic qualifications, the applicant must profess a belief in the Christian religion and be a person of good moral character.

Nov. 7, 1851. An act to provide for an office for the superintendent of schools at Tahlequah, capital of the nation.

Nov. 27, 1851. An act granting the American Board of Foreign Missions permission to establish a mission and school at Killermores.

Nov 16, 1859. An act providing for taking care of and keeping in repair the seminary buildings. (Which were not in use)

Nov. 18, 1859. The board of directors were authorized to put the seminaries "into operation again", when means should be furnished by the government at Washington. They were to be opened at this time as non-boarding schools.

July 7, 1865. An act to gather together and take care of the furniture and other property belonging to the male and female seminaries. (Evidently they were closed once more)

Oct. 28, 1865. An act granting permission to Rev Evan Jones and his son J. B. Jones to live within the nation as missionaries. Reference made to Art. VI, Sec. 9, Constitution.

Oct. 23, 1866. An act to provide for Cherokee orphans.



Oct. 31, 1866. An act appointing a committee to aid the baptist mission to select a new site and granting them free timber, building material and fuel.

Nov. 9, 1866. An act authorizing the principal chief to enter into correspondence with the Congregational, Presbyterian, Moravian, and the two branches of the Methodist churches, inviting them to renew their labors in the Cherokee nation.

Nov. 27, 1866. An act appropriating \$200.00 and granting the amount to Rev. J. B. Jones, a missionary, to prepare and publish a book "on the plan of Ollendorf", in English and Cherokee.

I

A compilation of the Cherokee laws of 1875<sup>I</sup> contains the following interesting additions and changes. A national board of education was to consist of the principal chief, assistant principal chief, the executive council, treasurer and three commissioners. This board was to exercise full control over the orphan asylum, the male and female seminaries and education at large. The nine original districts were divided into three supervisory districts, over each of which one commissioner was placed. The first, comprising the Coo-we-skoo-we, Delaware and Saline districts; the second comprising the Tahlequah, Going Snake and Flint districts, and the third comprising the Sequoyah, Illinois and Canadian districts. The examination of teachers was left to the general board and certificates were graded first, second and third. Each commissioner was required to make the usual statistical report for his district. Teachers were assigned by the board of education,

I. Laws of the Cherokee Nation, Compiled June 21, 1875  
 Chap. X, "An Act Relating to Education", pp 189-195  
 Sections I to 26.





not hired by the local board as formerly. The board of education was authorized to adopt a uniform system of text books, apparatus and supplies, which were to be furnished the pupils free. They were also directed to open the male seminary at once. (It appears the female seminary was in operation) The work was divided into primary, a three year's course, and higher, a four year's course. The latter was designated more particularly for the seminaries, but the seminaries maintained a "primary department". For admission to the seminaries, an examination was required in spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic (Including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division), and geography of the states and territories. The board was to furnish tuition, clothing, board and lodging to the primary department pupils; tuition only to the others, but board in every case was to be furnished at actual cost. It was recommended that as soon as possible the nation should furnish board and living expense to all free of cost. The board was authorized to increase and enlarge the boarding schools as rapidly as possible. The board was given further authority to organize the schools as industrial or manual labor boarding schools. A number of the male sex, who had completed the seminary, might be sent away to be educated at the expense of the nation. Day pupils were given permission to attend boarding schools. No changes were made in the location of the district schools.

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Later laws provide that the board of education shall consist of "three persons of liberal literary attainments", to

I. Laws of the Cherokee Nation, Compiled 1880,  
Chap. X, "An Act Relating to Education", pp 230 to  
240, Sections I to 36.



be appointed by the principal chief. A discussion of organization, duties and division of districts follows. Money is to be drawn only on warrants and upon presentation of an itemized statement. The board is charged to visit each seminary and orphanage twice each term. The number to be admitted to the seminaries to be determined by the board. Before any school is opened, the patrons must provide a library to keep the books and stationery of the school. The school year is divided into two terms of twenty and sixteen weeks respectively. Other things being equal, in appointment of teachers the preference should be given to members of the nation. The salary of primary teachers shall be \$35.00 per month. The number of primary schools was limited to one hundred, to be distributed in the nine districts as follows--

<u>District</u>	<u>No. Schools</u>	<u>No. Children</u>
Cooweeskoowee	16	874
Deleware	15	806
Saline	7	384
Geing Snake	13	735
Flint	8	420
Tahlequah	14	757
Illinois	11	595
Sequoyah	7	372
Canadian	<u>9</u>	<u>461</u>
Total	100	5404

Dec. 7, 1887. The directors were ordered not to permit the children of any person not a Cherokee to receive instruction at any school supported at the expense of the nation. After 1881





the salary of the members of the board should be \$600.00 per year. The salary of the teachers in the male and female seminaries was placed at,- Principal teacher, \$800.00; Ass't teacher \$500.00; primary teachers \$300.00. (Dec. 10, 1880) An act was passed providing that the boarding and clothing of primary pupils and the boarding of teachers and high school pupils should be let by contract to the lowest bidder.

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Laws of the Cherokees compiled still later indicate that a tribal superintendent was once more provided for, to be elected by joint ballot of the national council for a term of two years. Duties of the superintendent:- To adopt rules and regulations for all schools, examine teachers and determine qualifications for admission to the seminaries, prescribe uniform text books, grant or revoke teachers' certificates, discontinue any primary school with less than thirteen in average attendance, keep a record of all acts and appoint teachers to all schools. He must make an annual report to the council and visit all schools twice each term. Those who complete a normal course in a seminary or in the orphan school shall be entitled to a first class permanent certificate. Such a certificate, however, was always subject to revocation for intemperance or immoral conduct. The number of orphans admitted to the orphan school should not exceed 175, and none were to be admitted under nine years. The number of boys in the male seminary should not exceed 160 and none should be admitted under thirteen years. Preference should be given the older boys. It was provided here that no day school pupils should be admit-



ted to the boarding schools. The rate of board in the seminaries and colored high schools was fixed at \$5.00 per month. Anyone refusing to pay board might be dismissed from school. The average attendance at the colored high school must remain 25 in order to continue the school. Teachers and members of their families were required to pay board at the rate of \$5.00 per month. A physician for the orphanage was voted a salary of \$800.00 per year. He was to furnish his own medicines and board, and visit the school every day if necessary. The colored high school should at the beginning enroll 25 students; after two years, 25 more were to be enrolled. The course being four years 25 would be admitted and 25 discharged every two years, with a total attendance at any one time limited to 50. In making admissions to the primary department of the seminaries, the superintendent was instructed to give preference to non-English speaking Cherokees and apportion them from the various district schools.

For purposes of later discussion we should note certain tendencies in the conduct of the Cherokee schools. At the beginning, they welcomed the missionaries very heartily, but said little about them later. The seminaries always supported a "primary department", and for this reason could hardly be called true secondary schools. The seminaries were effectively closed to the masses and attendance was denied day school pupils. The attention of the council was continually directed toward the boarding schools rather than the day schools, again proving the selective character of their system. Attendance was limited in all the schools, seminaries, orphanage and day schools.





Whites were excluded from all Indian schools. Because of the limited facilities, compulsory attendance was not emphasized. The organization and administration of the schools, however, was surprisingly well advanced, considering all conditions.

By way of comparison, we shall next consider educational progress among the Choctaws and Creeks during this same period. Among the Choctaws we find educational legislation as follows.

Oct. 30, 1876. An unappropriated sum of \$1,522.50 had accumulated from school fund royalties on coal, timber, stone, etc. An act was passed providing that nine boys of the nation be sent to Roanoke College, Salem, Va. Three were to be selected from each of the three districts and the superintendent was to accompany them to Virginia.

Oct. 9, 1877. \$2700.00 was appropriated for the same purpose and the number of boys was increased to twelve.

Oct. 11, 1877. An act providing for medical examination of all pupils in the New Hope seminary, Spencer academy and the public schools. If any have affected lungs, they should be excluded and their places filled with healthy children. Provision was also made for three more girls at New Hope seminary.

Oct. 12, 1883. Reports to the national council of the committee on "Schools", in reference to state superintendent Ed. McCurtain, the superintendent of the New Hope seminary and a district supt.

Oct. 13, 1882. Gifts of bedding, clothing, singing books, a bell, etc, donated by missionary societies and Sunday schools

I. Laws of the Choctaw Nation, 1876, 1883, and 1884.



to the orphan school, accepted with thanks.

Oct. 19, 1883. An act to regulate the attendance at boarding schools. If a student failed to appear within ten days after his assignment to the school, the sheriff should look him up.

Oct. 22, 1883. Number assigned to each boarding school was as follows. Spencer Academy, 100 boys; New Hope Seminary, 100 girls; Armstrong Academy, 50 orphan boys; Choctaw orphan school, 50 orphan girls.

Oct. 25, 1883. All orphan boys should be removed to Armstrong academy. \$5000.00 was appropriated for this school; agriculture and manual training were to be encouraged.

Oct. 25, 1883. The Choctaw Orphan school was removed to Wheelock and named the Wheelock Seminary. \$5000.00 was voted.

Oct. 26, 1883. An act prohibiting the disturbing of schools or churches, imposing a fine of \$25.00 or 25 to 100 lashes.

Nov. 2, 1883. The county judge must select the orphans for the school and the sheriff must convey them to the school.

Oct. 11, 1884. Both houses assemble to elect the state superintendent, district trustees and supreme judges.

Oct. 21, 1884. Report of Supt. Robe of Wheelock seminary accepted and \$4500.00 appropriated to complete his building.

Nov. 24, 1884. An act supplemental to the school law of 1879.

It is admitted that the neighborhood schools are a failure without the compulsory feature. All children from 7 to 18 are to be enrolled and a fine of 10 cents per day imposed on all absence. Trustees are required to report the enumeration.

The list of appropriations for education made by the Choctaw







council during the sessions of 1883 and 1884 are as follows.

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<u>Appropriations</u>	<u>1883.</u>	<u>1884.</u>
Superintendent and Dist. Trustees	\$800.00	\$800.00
Neighborhood Schools (3 dists)	15000.00	21000.00
Scholars in States	8000.00	8000.00
Spencer Academy	10000.00	10000.00
New Hope Seminary	10000.00	10000.00
Wheelock Seminary	5000.00	5000.00
Armstrong Academy	5000.00	5000.00
" " Repairs		2500.00
New Hope Seminary, Repairs		2757.09

The actual operation of the Choctaw system is very clearly shown in a letter written by a former district superintendent of the Choctaw nation. He writes, in part, as follows. "Our board of education was composed of a general superintendent and three district superintendents, one for each district, and I was one of these. I think I had about fifty local or neighborhood schools under my control and I assisted in looking after the academies, making contracts for supplies, etc. Our system of schools was very similar-in a newer and cruder sense- to those of the surrounding states. The nation paid \$2.00 per pupil for every Indian and Choctaw freedman (negro descendents of slaves owned by Choctaws) who actually attended 15 days or over during any one month, and ten cents per day for all under that. The school fund came from royalties on coal, timber,

1. Laws of the Choctaw Nation, 1876, 1883 and 1884.

2. B. S. Smiser, Atoka, Oklahoma, June 20, 1914.



stone, from permits to white people and interest on invested funds. We had separate schools for Indians and Freedmen. All books and other supplies were furnished by the nation, free of charge....The nation also provided for paying the board of pupils living in sparsely settled localities, where a school could not be supported, if the pupils would go to places and attend where schools were already located. The nation also educated from nine to a dozen pupils at state institutions, such as they would select, or kept that many at these schools all the time...Each district superintendent conducted his examinations, issuing 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade certificates for 1, 2 and 3 years...I think the Indians took as much interest in education as the average white people....I think our system of education was equal to and superior to many, and only needed to be carried out well, purged from graft and politics, as many need, to be made the best...Our school was compulsory. Parents and guardians of pupils who did not attend school, unless they had a lawful excuse, were fined 10 cents a day, or the same amount that was paid them for the term, if they attended...Free supplies included all necessary material, such as books, charts, globes, maps, tablets, pencils, paper, ink, etc."

The following abstract of educational legislation of the Muskogee, or Creek, nation will display some interesting differences. A superintendent of public instruction was to be elected by the national council for a term of two years.

He is to maintain an office at the national capital, be present

I. Laws of the Muskogee Nation, 1880, Chap. I,  
Article V, p 16.





at the national council and at the "National Teacher's Institute of which he is to be the president. He is to take charge of all schools, act as chairman of the board of examiners and shall be subject to impeachment. His salary is placed at \$600.00 per yr.

I

Neighborhood Schools. \$275,000.00 held in trust by the United States made up the permanent school fund. Twenty eight neighborhood schools were established, including seven for Freedmen. It was the duty of the superintendent to appoint all teachers and three trustees for each school. The council was empowered to make annual appropriations for text books. Books adopted were, - McGuffey's Readers, Davies' Arithmetics, Smith's grammar, Towns speller and analysis, Mitchell's and Olney's Geography and Atlas. The scholastic year was to continue ten months, from Sept. 1, to June 30. Teachers salary was placed at \$400.00 per year. A school must commence with twenty pupils and must be suspended if the attendance falls below fifteen. Parents are required to keep their children in school. Teachers must report each quarter to the superintendent who in turn must make an annual report to the national council.

2

Examination of Teachers. The superintendent and three other competent persons make up the examining board. Certificates are issued for one year and the teacher must show ability to teach arithmetic, grammar and composition, U. S. history, geography, penmanship and the "practical duties of teaching".

1. Laws of the Muskogee Nation, 1880, Chap. V,  
"Education", Article I, p 40.

2. Ibid. Article II, p 42.



## I

The Teachers' Institute was a regular corporate body composed of all teachers of neighborhood schools. The annual session began the first Tuesday in July. Mission Boarding Schools.<sup>2</sup> A law provided that the principal chief of the nation appoint two boards of five each to enter into contracts with the Tallahassee and Asbury missions. "Articles of agreement between John Harrell, Supt. of Indian Missions, M. E. Church, South, in behalf of the Board of Foreign Missions of said church, of the first part, and Pleasant Porter, Chilly McIntosh, Joseph W. Perryman, George W. Stidham, James McHenry, trustees duly empowered by the Muskogee nation to act in the premises for the second part." The contract provided for the education of 80 children (later changed to males) for four years, to be taught the usual high school subjects, including agriculture and manual training. The nation agreed to appropriate \$70.00 per year for each child, or a total of \$5600.00, to be paid the treasurer of the board of missions. They also agreed to provide the necessary land and timber. The superintendent of this school was to report directly to the national council.

A similar contract was made with the baptists, in which 100 children, 50 male and 50 female, were to be educated at \$60.00 each. It appeared that in this case the nation and the missionary society each invested \$5000.00 for this school, and a later amendment provided that the nation could acquire a clear title by paying back the \$5000.00 contributed by the society.

I. Laws of the Muskogee Nation, Chap V, "Education", Article III p 43.

2. Ibid. Article IV, p 44.







## I

A final article provided for the education of six "youths", to be placed in methodist schools in the states.

## 2

When the Creek laws were compiled in 1892,<sup>2</sup> the school fund amounted to an annual appropriation of \$76,468.40, by virtue of treaties with the United States as follows,- 1826, \$1710.00; 1833, \$1000.00; 1856, 10,000.00; 1866, \$13,758.40; 1889, \$50,000.00. Under "school law" we find the usual division into three districts, and three classes of schools, primary, intermediate and high. The board may declare any schools "manual labor schools". The school year is to be nine months of twenty days and the legal age from 6 to 18. Anyone is encouraged to attend the primary and intermediate schools, but pupils for the high schools must be selected. Salaries for teachers in the primary and intermediate schools range from \$350.00 to \$750.00 per year. Two orphan schools were provided, (one for colored) for which \$10,000.00 was appropriated annually. These were to be industrial schools.

Interesting contributions to the whole of Indian legislation of this period are furnished by the Choctaw tribe as we have observed. Royalties on Coal, timber and stone enriched their school fund. Then they provided for compulsory attendance with a definite system of fining the parents. This unfortunately, applied only to the neighborhood schools,- their boarding schools were as select as those of the Cherokees. Both Choctaws and Creeks also sent select youths away to be educated

1. Laws of the Muskogee Nation, 1880, Art., V, p 52.

2. Ibid., Compiled 1892, Chapter VII, p 70.



in the states.

The Creeks seemed quite particular as to the examination and qualifications of teachers, insisting on some knowledge of the practical duties of the teacher in addition to subject matter. The "contracts" formed with mission boards are very interesting. The "intermediate schools" of the Creeks were really designed to be agricultural schools, but the emphasis on this work among all the tribes seemed only half-hearted.

It is highly improbable that a further study of the laws of the Chickasaws and Seminoles would discover anything different in character from what we have observed among the Cherokees, Choctaws and Creeks. Certainly enough has been said to prove conclusively that these five tribes developed an independent system of education of considerable proportions. The machinery of a system was at hand, which would compare favorably with that established in other new states during this period.

One very important phase of the work of the earlier period, to which we have already referred, and to which the tribal laws continually call attention, was the untiring effort of the missionaries and mission schools. One of these early missionaries, J. S. Murrow, is still living at Atoka, Oklahoma. In a letter to me dated June 23, 1914, he writes as follows,-  
 "I came to the territory in 1857. At that time there were twelve or fourteen "boarding schools" among these five civilized tribes. They were all under the management of the Boards of Missions of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist churches.







They were manual laboring schools as well as literary. They each had a large farm cultivated by the boys. They were managed well, with economy and efficiency. The Indian youths were taught, not only books, but industry, morality and real Christianity. They were important factors in the present development, civilization and general uplift of these Indian tribes. The war set these people back many, many years, and since the war, the grafters have well nigh completed the ruin of the fullbloods."

As we have already seen, the tribal laws accord quite fully with the estimate of this aged missionary. We find many references to the missions and instances where the churches were urged to continue their work. Timber, fuel and building material was voted them and every assistance given them. In a law passed by the Cherokee council Nov. 7, 1865, we find this rather remarkable statement. <sup>I</sup> "Resolved by the National Council: That our sincere thanks are hereby tendered to the Baptist Missionary Society of Boston. It is now more than forty years since the missionaries of that society came into the Cherokee nation. When the Cherokees were poor and covered with darkness, light with regard to the other world was brought to us by Evan Jones, and at a later date by his son, John B. Jones. And we do bear witness that they have done their work well, and that they have striven to discharge the duties incumbent upon them in doing good to the people and performing faithfully their duties to God. And we bear witness that their work was highly prosperous up to the time when they were driven out of our country

I. Laws of the Cherokee Nation, 1839 to 1867, p II8.



by the United States agent in 1861. And now, after the close of the war, we are informed that the missionary society have determined to resume their work in the Cherokee nation. For this determination we hereby return them many thanks; and we hereby declare that it is our desire that they will more strongly than ever push forward the work of enlightening our land. And we do further declare that we hold in high esteem Evan Jones and his son J. B. Jones: Now, therefore, Be it Enacted by the National Council,- That Evan Jones and his son J. B. Jones, be and are hereby admitted to citizenship in the nation, together with their families, and all rights allowable to white men under the constitution are hereby granted them. Our object in so doing is that our people may be instructed by them in good morals and general intelligence." This will serve to illustrate the degree of confidence the Indians placed in the work of the early missionaries. Later annual appropriations were made to the mission schools and definite contracts were entered into to educate certain Indian children.

The first report of the government superintendent of Indian schools, John D. Benedict, contains an interesting  
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comment on this matter. "So long as these mission boards remained in charge of these schools, the educational affairs of the Territory progressed fairly well, but there came a time, not many years ago, when the Indian authorities thought themselves wise enough to control these schools and appoint the teachers and superintendents therein. Many an honest old

I. Annual Report of the U. S. Indian Inspector for the Indian Territory, 1899, p 18.







Indian looks back to that time with regret, and it is very generally conceded that the schools of the Territory have not made any material advancement since the change was made." We conclude then that the various church mission schools supplied a very definite need in those early days.

Now, however, we find it imperative that we turn our attention away from the Indian for a time and direct it toward the white man. The reservation of this territory for Indians made no provision for the intruding white man so far as education was concerned. The tribal laws allowed whites to come into the reservation under certain conditions. Any white person marrying an Indian would be enrolled as an Indian and given all rights of citizenship in the nation. Then there was a regular schedule of "permits" adopted by the tribes, after the payment of which, whites could live within the limits of the nation and conduct business there. Thus in the Cherokee laws<sup>1</sup> we find a drover's tax of five cents per head per week; a merchant's tax of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 1% on all goods; a peddler's tax of 5%; Colporteurs of sacred literature were exempt. Permits for hiring citizens of the United States could be obtained for fifty cents per month, with a bond of \$250.00 conditioned on the good behavior of the employee. In the Creek nation<sup>2</sup> we find the following interesting schedule of permits for all who were not members of the nation.

Per Year

Dealers in hides, furs and produce- - - \$ 50.00  
Hotels, depending on size- - - \$24.00 to 150.00

1. Laws of the Cherokee Nation, Compiled 1875, Chap XI
2. Laws of the Muskogee Nation, Compiled 1892.



	<u>Per Year</u>
Printing Office- - - - -	\$ 50.00
Grist and Flouring Mill- - - - -	50.00
Cotton Gin and Mill- - - - -	50.00
Cotton Gin alone- - - - -	24.00
Grist Mill alone- - - - -	24.00
Livery and Feed Stable- - - - -	50.00
Feed Stable alone- - - - -	24.00
Dray or Hack- - - - -	12.00
Harness Shop, Boots, Shoes- - - - -	24.00
Blacksmith- - - - -	24.00
Furniture Dealer- - - - -	24.00
Insurance Agent- - - - -	50.00
Bank, - - - 1% of Stock.	
Physician- - - - -	25.00
Dentist- - - - -	25.00
Contractor- - - - -	25.00
Photo Gallery- - - - -	50.00
Butcher Shop- - - - -	50.00
Lunch Stand- - - - -	24.00
Jewelry Shop- - - - -	24.00
Laundry- - - - -	24.00
Barber Shop- one chair- - - - -	12.00
Each additional chair- - - - -	6.00
Tin Shop- - - - -	24.00
Tailor Shop- - - - -	24.00
Dress Making and Millinery- - - - -	24.00
Ice Cream Stand- - - - -	12.00
Billiard and Pool- - - - -	50.00
Merry-go-round- - - - -	24.00
Circus and Menagerie, per day- - - - -	25.00
Circus alone- - - - -	10.00
Concert, per day- - - - -	5.00
Travelling Photographer, per week- - - - -	1.00

From these laws it will be observed that a great deal of money was paid by the whites for the privilege of living in the Indian Territory, or conducting business there. However, little of this money was ever used for schools or for public improvements, which would in any way benefit the whites. They were absolutely debarred from attendance upon the Indian seminaries and were charged regular rates of tuition if they attended the crude neighborhood schools. Often even this was denied them





as we have seen in the law passed Dec. 7, 1887 by the Cherokee nation forbidding the director of a school to admit anyone other than a Cherokee to any school supported at the expense of the nation.

We may infer that some few educational facilities were offered. There is some evidence that the tribal laws were not always strictly enforced, and this may have worked to some advantage to the whites in allowing them to continue in attendance at the Indian schools. Then too, there were occasional schools established purely through private initiative. A school which is reported to be the first free school for whites in Indian Territory was established by Mr Campbell Russell, at Warner, Oklahoma. Mr Russell writes of this school--<sup>I</sup> "The school was on my land and was built largely to help me get a better class of tenants. It lasted three months in the summer and I paid the teacher \$25.00 per month--had no trouble to get a good teacher at that price. I think the school was worth all it cost."

There is perhaps one other way in which educational facilities might have been offered the whites. With the coming of many whites into the territory, many missionaries no doubt felt strongly drawn to their own race, to the possible neglect<sup>2</sup> of the Indian. The Indian missions were well supported, because of the strong plea which could be made for funds to support such

1. Dated June 22, 1914.

2. Murrow, J. S. "The Indian's Side", p 25.



work, but it was manifestly a misappropriation of such money to use it for the benefit of the whites when it was expressly donated for work among the Indians. In the end, we can find very little evidence of educational facilities for the white people which could possibly be adequate to the situation.

We have up to the present time said nothing regarding education in the western part of the state. This land was occupied almost entirely by Indians of the blanket, or uncivilized type. There was no organized tribal government and no tribal fund for school purposes. Twenty boarding schools<sup>I</sup> were established by the government, and there were about ten mission schools. The total enrollment in all of these schools was not over 3000.

In general then, if we were to summarize the educational facilities and growth during the first period, the evidence at hand would warrant these conclusions,- (1) Missionaries followed the Indians to the territory and established and conducted the most efficient schools we find any trace of .

(2) These were at first supported entirely by the various mission boards, later they were generously subsidized from the tribal funds, but finally such subsidies were pretty generally withdrawn. (3) A system of tribal schools was established in each of the five civilized tribes, which was quite complete in organization. However, attendance was always limited.

(4) The facilities for the education of the whites were limited

I. Wilson, R. H., "Progress of Education in Oklahoma since 1889", Oklahoma School Herald, May 1912.





to permission to attend the Indian day school upon payment of tuition; occasional facilities offered by the mission schools, which were designed for Indians exclusively, and private schools which could accomodate but very few. (5) Education in the western part of the state was confined to blanket Indians and the families of government employees, and was administered by the mission schools and government boarding schools.

(6) In the whole territory, east and west, the total number enrolled, according to the best information obtainable in the office of the state superintendent, was 15,925, out of a total population of over 325,000. Assuming that one fifth of the population is made up of children of school age, we may estimate that at least 75% of the children of the territories, up to the year 1889, had absolutely no educational facilities whatever and had, in all probability, never attended school.



### Territorial Period.

With the coming of the "eighty niners", the educational history of Oklahoma as a whole really begins. Certain tracts in the western portion of the territory had been abandoned by the blanket Indians, and the government opened these for homestead settlement by means of a "rider" attached to an Indian appropriation bill. The fact that this act was contained in a relatively insignificant "rider" is of some importance in that no provision was made for territorial government, as there probably might have been with a more formal proceeding. In the course of events, President Harrison issued a proclamation setting April 22, 1889 at noon, as the day and hour for the opening of the new country. Settlers gathered for miles along the boundry line and at the sounding of the bugle, crossed over and took up their claims in the opened tracts. Thousands entered on that first day. Many were without resources of any kind and all were without homes.

For a year there was no organized government and the people were without laws except the United States criminal statutes and land laws. There was no such thing as local taxation possible, because the land could not be taxed until patents were issued and this required five years of "proving up." Without power to create public resources, without power to establish local self government, and with justice dispensed by distant federal courts, it was truly a situation demanding a





move on the part of the settlers themselves. In this the temper of the pioneers does not disappoint us, for we find them establishing private schools the first summer, and by fall the inhabitants of towns and villages had devised and established purely local systems of schools without the support of any laws.

The passage of the enabling act in 1890,<sup>2</sup> organized this land into Oklahoma Territory, providing for a territorial legislature and a system of free public schools modeled after those of the state of Nebraska. This act also contained some very important provisions with regard to schools for the new territory. Sections 16 and 36 of each township were reserved "for the purpose of being applied" to the public schools when the territory should become a state. All tracts of land which had previously been set aside for school purposes, to educational societies, or missionary boards at work among the Indians, were declared closed to settlement and were granted to the various organizations. It was further provided, that in all surveys for town sites, reservation must be made for school sites and other public purposes of not less than ten nor more than twenty acres. An appropriation of \$50,000.00 was made, to be expended by the governor "in temporary support and aid of the common schools" in the territory as soon as the legislature should take the necessary steps to create a permanent system.

As might be expected, the territorial legislature at

I. Wilson, R. H., "Progress of Education in Oklahoma Since 1889." Oklahoma School Herald, June 1912.

2. Oklahoma Red Book, "Organic Act", pp535 to 538.



once took up the question of public education. The Territory made provision for setting aside the sections mentioned in the organic act and reserved 1,413,862 acres as endowment for the common schools and 309,424 acres for support of schools of higher learning. To properly administer the school funds, a board of commissioners was provided, composed of the superintendent of public instruction, secretary of state and state treasurer, to manage all school funds. Whenever as much as \$1000.00 had accumulated, the board should meet to apportion the money in the various counties according to the enumeration. For the ensuing five years all University and Normal school funds should be diverted to erecting buildings. Complete provision is made for the loaning of the funds and security against possible loss.

In the chapter relating to common schools,<sup>2</sup> Art. I provided for a state board of education made up of the state superintendent, the president of the state normal school at Edmond, the president of the state university, one city superintendent and one county superintendent. The salary of these officers was fixed at \$3.00 per day and mileage. (1893). Art. II deals with the office of the state superintendent, outlining the usual duties and reports of such an officer. Art. III created the office of county superintendent and defined his duties in detail. (1893) The county superintendent was authorized to divide each county into convenient districts,

1. Snyder's Compiled Laws of Oklahoma, Chap. 101, pp 1597 to 1604.

2. Ibid., Chap. 102, pp 1605 to 1665.





no district to have less than eight children of school age.

(1897) The county superintendent to be elected at each general election. (1899) Art. V, Cities of the first class. Provision is made for a separate independent district, controlled by a city board of education with corporate powers. Details concerning the election and the organization of the board are fully outlined, as are also the duties of the city superintendent. An examining board of three is provided and a definite time set for school board meetings when they may levy taxes or vote bonds. The instruction in the schools is to be non-sectarian, though the Scriptures may be read without comment. Art. VI, Districts. A complete plan for the organization of districts is contained in this article. At the district meeting a tax not exceeding 2% may be levied to provide a school house and keep it in repair. The grounds are to be not less than one acre. At this meeting they may also determine the length of the term, which may not be less than three months during the year.

Art. VII, District Schools. Branches to be taught in the district schools are orthography, reading, writing, English, grammar, geography, arithmetic, and "such other branches" as may be deemed advisable. All subjects are to be taught in the English language. (1893) The school month is to consist of four weeks, of five days each, six hours per day. In the event of a deficit, after the full amount of 2% has been levied, tuition may be assessed on the parents. Art. VIII, Provision is made for districts containing territory in more than one county.

Art. IX, District officers. A detailed outline of all the ordinary



duties of these officers. Art. X, County High Schools. Counties may establish high schools. (1901) All provisions as to board, organization, buildings, teachers, etc given. Graduates from the normal course of the county high school may be granted a second grade certificate and admitted to the first year of professional work at the state normal school. Those taking preparatory courses may be admitted to the freshman year at the university without examination. Art. XI, Kindergartens. Any city having a population of 2500 or more may establish a kindergarten. In this event the enumeration of pupils between 4 and 6 may be included in the claim for the apportionment of funds. The word "kindergarten" is defined as, "the application of the methods of Froebel, or some approved American development of such a method; and no merely sub-primary grades". Teachers must be graduates of some approved kindergarten school or course. Art. XII, Union or graded school districts. Provision is made for uniting two or more districts for the purpose of forming a graded school. Any single district may also form a graded school if large enough. No sectarian doctrine is permitted, but the Bible may be read without comment. Art. XIV, Separate Schools. Separate schools must be established for white and colored children. Provision is made for having children transferred to other districts where there are less than ten of one color. The furniture and equipment of the two schools is to be equal. All provisions made for the employment and payment of teachers in the colored schools, for buildings, sites and repairs. (1901) Art. XV, Teachers and Certificates. Three







grades of certificates were established with requirements for each. A county board of examiners is authorized, provision for issuing temporary certificates and a penalty of \$100.00 to \$500.00 imposed for issuing any certificate unlawfully.

Art. XVI, Compulsory education. Children are compelled to attend school between the ages of eight and sixteen, unless they have completed the eighth grade, or have a certificate from a reputable physician excusing them on the basis of poor health. The board of education must report a list of all pupils in the schools and notify parents of non-compliance with this law. Truant officers may be designated, and books will be supplied by the county where the parents are too poor to purchase them. In the case of a widowed mother, who is dependent on the son's wages for support, the boy may be granted a scholarship approximating what his weekly salary would be. A penalty of \$10.00 to \$50.00 is attached to any violation of the compulsory law. Art. XVII, Miscellaneous. At least three months school must be maintained in each district. A penalty is attached to any destruction of school property. Provision is made for a definite appropriation for school libraries. The United States flag is to be displayed in each school room every day; the board to make the necessary provision for this under penalty. Ethics and humane education are required and vivisection is prohibited. Arrangements are made for the temporary transfer of pupils to other districts where accommodations cannot be secured at home.



The legislation in regard to the state schools is of considerable interest. <sup>I</sup> Art. I, University of Oklahoma. On condition that forty acres of land and \$10,000.00 be given by the city of Norman and Cleveland county, the state university was founded and located at Norman. (1893) A board of regents, composed of the governor and nine others appointed by him, were to have full control. Colleges of Arts, Letters, Normal and Professional were designated and co-education stipulated. The standing of the diploma was determined. No tuition was to be charged to any who had resided in the state one year. The board of regents was authorized to receive bequests. In 1903 an act of Congress granting one section (36) in Cleveland county to the university, was approved by the state. Art. II, University Preparatory School. This school was located at Tonkawa in 1901, with the expressed purpose of preparing students for the university. A board of regents composed of the governor and two appointees exercised control. A tax of two mills for two years (1901-1902) was voted for this school. Art. IV, State Normal School at Edmond. Established in 1890 with the exclusive purpose of training in the art of teaching. Forty acres of land near Edmond was furnished free to the territory. The institution was controlled by a board of education, composed of the state superintendent, the state treasurer and three others appointed by the governor. Art. V, Normal diplomas. Such a diploma should entitle one to a state certificate good for five years without examination. Art. VI, Northwestern Normal. Established at Alva, Oklahoma, with the





Edmond normal board acting as board of regents. \$3000.00 was appropriated. Art. VII, Southwestern Normal. The purpose of this school is declared to be the same as for Edmond and Alva and the same board is placed in control. Art. XI, Colored Agricultural and Normal School. Established at Langston in 1897. Normal, agricultural and mechanic art education to be offered to both sexes. A board of regents was provided, composed of the state superintendent, state treasurer and three others appointed by the governor. Regulations for admission were provided by law. A tax of 3/10 mills in 1901 and 2/10 mills in 1902 was voted to support this school. Art. XII, State Agricultural and Mechanical College. A grant contained in two acts of Congress in 1862 and 1887 was accepted by the state and the "Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College" was located at Stillwater, Payne county, in 1890. An experiment station was provided in connection with the college. Control was exercised by a board of regents composed of five members. This was later changed to the board of agriculture.

We have thus listed a brief abstract of the educational legislation during the territorial period. At the time this affected only the western side, or Oklahoma Territory, but, with the coming of statehood many of these statutes were carried over into the new state, so they ultimately assume some significance for the east as well.

To properly administer the educational affairs of the new territory, a territorial superintendent was appointed and a school supervisor for each of the seven original counties.



The first superintendent reports great activity in the interest of education, which was manifest in the organization of districts, building of schools, organization of summer institutes for teachers, the establishment of an educational journal and the organization of a Territorial Teachers Association. After the first opening in 1889, other tracts of surplus lands were opened for settlement in 1891, 1892, 1893, 1895 and 1901. This would indicate that the work of organizing new school territory was going on during the whole first decade of territorial history. But in spite of the great increase in population during the ten years from 1891 to 1901, the per cent of the scholastic population enrolled in the schools steadily increased. A comparison of statistics for 1891 and 1901 shows the remarkable growth in a single decade.

	<u>1891.</u>	<u>1901.</u>
Whole Population Okla. Terr.	61,832	398,331
Total Scholastic Pop.	21,335	145,843
Total Enrollment	9,395	116,971
Per cent Enrolled	44	80
Number of Teachers	438	2,503
Average Salaries, Males	\$28.00	\$36.00
Average Salaries, Females	24.00	31.00
Total value school property	\$12,095.50	\$1,347,257.00
Total receipts	44,644.00	1,207,395.00
Enrollment State U.	89	393
Enrollment Edmond Normal	80	600
Enrollment A. and M. College	70	240

I. Wilson, R. H., "Progress of Education in Oklahoma Since 1889", Okla. School Herald, June 1912.





The great changes brought about in the western or Oklahoma Territory by the organic act, were at first little felt in the eastern Indian Territory. We have already noted that at the beginning of this period education was controlled almost entirely by the Indians themselves. Where formerly the schools were under strict supervision of the government, or, by common consent, turned over to the missionaries, now the tribal systems were in full control. We also observed that education among the Indians had gone over more and more to the boarding school type. This was expensive and the tribal councils found it necessary to restrict attendance and make the boarding schools very selective. Another definite tendency to be observed in the various tribal laws was the admission of pupils to the "primary department" of the various seminaries and academies, which were supposed to be strictly secondary schools. In the Cherokee nation attendance was restricted even in the orphanage and day schools; on the other hand the Choctaws had reasonably strict compulsory laws.

The Indians were left in charge of their own schools up to Feb. 1, 1899, when a general superintendent of all the Indian schools, J. D. Benedict, was appointed. His first report <sup>I</sup> gives a concise summary of conditions. Extracts from this report are as follows. "For several years past each nation has had its own school laws and school officials, the Cherokee nation having had control of its own educational affairs for a longer period than any other nation or tribe. The laws and



rules of management have varied somewhat in the several nations, but the defects, the weak points, in each have been much alike. In each nation there are two classes of schools, viz: boarding schools or academies, and neighborhood schools.

"While in some instances attempts have been made to convert the boarding schools into higher institutions of learning, yet, on account of the favoritism manifested in the selection of pupils to attend them, scarcely any of them have risen above the rank of the average common school, and in nearly every instance the primary pupils now outnumber the advanced students in each academy.

"It is not unusual to find four or five children of one family in a boarding school, while some citizens who have reared large families of children have never been able to get any of them assigned to the academies. In every nation these boarding schools have been regarded as favored institutions by the various boards of education. Money has been lavishly spent in the erection of buildings, the purchase of supplies, and the employment of teachers and other employees, while the neighborhood schools have suffered from neglect. The Indian authorities have built no neighborhood school buildings at all, it being the general requirement that every neighborhood must furnish its own schoolhouse. As a natural result of this plan, the country and village schoolhouses are cheaply built, poorly furnished, and illy adapted to the purposes of a school."

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Mr Benedict outlined the most serious defects of the

I. Annual Report of the U. S. Indian Inspector for  
Ind. Territory, 1899, p 20.





Indian schools as arising, (1) from incompetent supervision, (2) from irregular attendance, (3) from financial mismanagement, and (4) from neglect of the English language. At the time of his report only four of the twenty-six superintendents of the boarding schools were competent to teach the common branches, yet they usually selected their own teachers and often from among relatives or political friends. Parents seemed to have no conception of the importance of regular attendance and kept their children out on the slightest occasion. The practice of paying the superintendent of each school the appropriation made for his school quarterly in advance, led to extravagance and waste. Usually all the money would be gone before the last quarter was reached and the schools were run on credit with the expectation that the tribal council would make a special appropriation to meet the deficiency. Under these circumstances the schools were forced to pay the highest retail prices for all supplies because of the risk the merchant assumed in getting paid at all.

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Under needed improvements, in addition to what might be inferred from the above, he mentions competent teachers, better sanitary conditions and manual training. Few teachers had had any special training in their work and the neglect to keep up the summer normals made it impossible for them to improve. The schools were generally located in the country where natural surroundings should be conducive to health, but the question of ordinary sanitation received so little attention



that sickness was very prevalent and contagious diseases common. Since the Indians must remain an agricultural people because of their land claims, manual work and agriculture should be taught in the schools; but in spite of the many references made to manual labor in the tribal laws, this was almost wholly neglected. Schools having large farms often used condensed milk and did without eggs and butter.

Rather a significant statement, which expresses the general sentiment of the time relative to Indian institutions, is contained in the "platform" of the "Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends to the Indian"<sup>I</sup>. "The condition of affairs in the Indian Territory demonstrates the futility of all efforts to secure adequately the civilization of the Indians under the tribal relations against which we so earnestly protested. The complex questions arising from the relations of the Indian, negro and white man, the fact that non-citizen whites already outnumber the Indian population in the proportion of two to one, and that the large white population is without schools, and, to a large extent, uncontrolled by law, render the question of the Indian Territory one of the gravest importance. The wonderful progress of the five civilized tribes, in the face of many difficulties and the most unfavorable conditions, demonstrates the capacity of the Indians for a larger life and a better civilization, and the time has come when they are ready for the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of American citizenship."

I. Seventh Annual Report of The Lake Mohonk Conference, Lake Mohonk, New York, 1889, p 109.





One of the first steps in bringing about the change from the control of tribal laws, enrolling the Indians finally as citizens of the state and nation, was the appointment of the general superintendent for the Indian schools which we have indicated. Complete control of the Indian schools was not assumed at once, but came a little later as we shall see.

Possibly the most important act passed during this period was the "Curtis Bill" which was approved by Congress in 1898. Section 14 of this act provides for the incorporation of towns of 200 or more population, according to the laws of Arkansas. A tax of not over 2% could be levied for "school and other public purposes." The Arkansas law provided that the town council could establish free schools and contains the usual details in regard to organizing independent districts in towns and cities. Upon petition signed by twenty voters an election might be called at which a board of education, composed of six citizens are to be chosen to administer the schools of the town. Full details regarding the organization of this board, with a list of its powers and duties, are contained in the Arkansas statutes.

The entire inadequacy of this law to the situation is brought to light by the report of the superintendent for Indian schools for 1905. A few of the larger towns had taken advantage of the law, and through the aid of another special act of Congress, which authorized them to issue bonds for school

1. Oklahoma Red Book, vol I, p 541.

2. Mansfield's Digest, Laws of Ark., Sec. 6258-6276.

3. Report of U. S. Indian Inspector, 1905, p 45.



buildings, had succeeded in erecting substantial structures and establishing good schools. In order to issue bonds, however, the population must reach 1000, and many towns had not reached that stage. The smaller towns also had very little taxable wealth, since much of the real estate, even in the form of town lots, was non-taxable because of imperfect titles. Now however, in addition to the towns which had reached the required 200 or 1000 population, there were scores of smaller villages, which, under the Curtis Act, were powerless to establish a free school system. It must also be remembered that there were many prosperous rural communities which could not raise a dollar to support schools, and this condition existed up to statehood.

The Curtis Act further provided that all tribal laws should be abolished March 4, 1906, on the supposition that the territories would have acquired statehood by this time and that all government of Indian affairs would regularly come under the authority of the state of Oklahoma. This would, of course, be instantly felt by the schools, since the tribal funds would not be available after that date. Since it became plainly evident that statehood could not be granted early enough to take care of this situation, Congress passed a very interesting and important act, April 26, 1906,<sup>I</sup> providing for the continuation of all tribal schools under the strict supervision and authority of the Secretary of the Interior, "until such time as a public schools system shall have been established under territorial or state government, and proper provision made

I. Report of the U. S. Indian Inspector for the Indian Territory, 1907, pp 27 and 28.





thereunder for the education of Indian children." Sufficient funds, held for the tribes by the government, were placed at the disposal of the secretary of the Interior for carrying out the provisions of the act. Under the act, then, the following sums were made annually available for the maintainance of schools in the five civilized tribes.

Cherokee Nation	\$120,476.45
Creek Nation	83,143.62
Choctaw Nation	124,967.55
Chickasaw Nation	145,471.89
Seminole Nation	<u>23,788.00</u>
Total	\$497,847.31

In addition to these sums, which could be expended only for Indian schools, we find a prospect for relief for the whites in the following appropriation. <sup>I</sup> "For the maintainance and strengthening, and enlarging of the tribal schools of the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole nations, and making provision for the attendance of children of parents of other than Indian blood therein, and the establishment of new schools under the control of the department of the Interior, the sum of three hundred thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to be placed in the hands of the Secretary of the Interior and be disbursed by him under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe." The policy of the federal government is here plainly indicated, which is to take complete charge of all education in the Indian Territory until a state

I. Report of the U. S. Indian Inspector for Indian Territory, 1907, p 28.



system could be organized which should be strong enough to provide the necessary facilities.

In summing up the educational facilities during the territorial period just covered, we should feel justified in drawing the following general conclusions.

(1) The Opening of Oklahoma brought in thousands of white settlers, who were left without organized government for a year. We have some evidence of schools, the result of private enterprise, but there is no definite record of these.

(2) The organic act, forming Oklahoma into a territory, entirely distinct from Indian Territory, authorized the founding of schools modeled after those of Nebraska, until a territorial system could be perfected. The act also "reserved" sections 16 and 36 for purposes of a future land grant for the common schools.

(3) The new territorial legislature became very active in educational matters and the laws of the period exhibit very interesting tendencies. The common schools received great attention, as is displayed in the detailed laws regarding the establishment of districts. The training of teachers is considered important, since three normal schools were established. The vocational content of education was recognized in the attention to the teaching of agriculture, domestic science and the founding of agricultural colleges. The compulsory laws enacted during this period are second to none; are, in fact, in advance of many, particularly in the provision for paid





scholarships to the sons of widowed mothers. There is a strong tendency to go into great detail, as is shown in the laws regarding ethics, humane education, vivisection, etc. Then there seems from the first to be a definite tendency toward establishing an elaborate state school system. This is evidenced by the fact that seven institutions were launched before statehood; one university, one university preparatory school, three normal schools and two agricultural schools, white and colored. On the whole, the amount of legislation during this period would argue for a live interest in education, entirely aside from any reference to the content of it.

(4) The abuses arising from the management of the Indian schools under their own tribal laws, led to the appointment of a general superintendent for Indian schools by the government in 1899. His attitude appeared to be, at first, one of supervision and co-operation. Later the government took complete control of all schools.

(5) The Curtis Act, passed in 1898, brought relief to the whites who lived in towns and cities, but did not affect the conditions obtaining in the villages under 200 in population, nor in the rural communities.

(6) The Act of Congress of April 26, 1906, in taking complete charge of the Indian schools, also made an annual appropriation of \$300,000.00, which became available for the education of children of people of "other than Indian blood."



### Statehood Period.

Statehood for Oklahoma came only after a long struggle which was no doubt prolonged and intensified by those who wished to make two states out of the two territories. There was quite naturally a great deal of rivalry between two sections so widely separated in tradition, population and natural interests. This sentiment was continually agitated by a class of politicians who hoped to see two states admitted, thereby increasing the number of political offices available under the new government. Congress, just as determined to admit but one state, forced the political leaders to unite and draft a single constitution. Such a conclusion, however, could not prevent both sections from attempting to derive the greatest possible advantage from the newly organized government. The present state superintendent sums up the situation well when he says,<sup>I</sup> "At this critical moment the state had a total population of 1,412,000 people, including whites, Indians, negro<sup>2</sup>s and outlaws. As has already been shown, she had established a system of free public schools and had located five state institutions, while the federal government and the missionaries were still trying to educate the blanket Indians. In the eastern section of the country the five civilized tribes, with a population of approximately 200,000, were jealous of their own school system, and some 500,000 white settlers, with their 200 municipal schools, were anxious to

I. Wilson, H. H. "Progress of Education in Oklahoma Since 1889", Okla. School Herald, June, 1912.





draw support from the taxable values of the western section as one of the benefits of statehood. The legislature located a number of state institutions on the east side of the new state in order that it might share equally with the west side. The federal government and the missionaries were still carrying on their educational work among the five civilized tribes. The difficult question which faced the new superintendent was the one of cementing these varied forms of educational endeavor into one harmonious and effective system under the laws of the new state."

I

The Enabling Act of Congress, passed June 14, 1906, giving complete directions for the formation of the new state, contained some interesting references to education. Section 7 formally grants sections 16 and 36, which had been previously reserved by the organic act, together with any indemnity lands in lieu of these sections, to the support of the common schools of the state. In lieu of Indian lands which could not be granted, Congress made a cash grant of \$5,000,000.00 to form a permanent school fund for the state. Until the state made provision to receive and manage this fund, it should remain in the United States Treasury at 3% interest. Section 8 set aside section 13 in the Cherokee Outlet, the Tonkawa Indian reservation and the Pawnee Indian reservation and such other lands as may be opened, to the support of state institutions apportioned as follows: To the university and the university preparatory school at Tonkawa, one third; to the state normals



established or to be established, one third; to the agricultural and mechanical college and the colored agricultural and normal school, one third. Section 9 provides that the land set apart for the common schools may be sold to the highest bidder, preference being given to the lessee, or leased for not longer than ten years. Section 10 provides much the same for the university lands. Section 11 provides that an amount equal to 5% of the sale of all public lands in the new state be paid by the government into the permanent fund for common schools. Section 12 provides that in lieu of certain lands for internal improvements and swamp lands granted other new states, the following grants be made to specific institutions: To the University of Oklahoma, 250,000 acres; to the University Preparatory School at Tonkawa, 150,000 acres; to the Agricultural and Mechanical College, 250,000 acres; to the Colored Agricultural and Normal School, 100,000 acres; and to the normal schools, 300,000 acres.

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In the new constitution, which was formed in accordance with the provisions of the enabling act, we find Article XI, entitled "State and School Lands", accepting all grants made by the government, with a pledge to keep the permanent fund inviolate and replace any funds which might be lost through mismanagement. The state further provides that the permanent fund is to be invested either in first mortgages on good farm land, Oklahoma state bonds, Oklahoma county bonds, school district bonds or United States bonds in the order named.

I. Oklahoma Red Book, vol I, pp 82, 83, and 84.







XIII  
Article <sup>^</sup> deals exclusively with "Education". This article is so concisely stated and has been so fundamental in later legislation that I reproduce it here in full.

Section 1. The Legislature shall establish and maintain a system of free public schools wherein all the children of the state may be educated.

Section 2. The Legislature shall provide for the establishment and support of institutions for the care and education of the deaf, dumb and blind of the state.

Section 3. Separate schools for white and colored children with like accomodation shall be provided by the legislature and impartially maintained. The word "colored children" as used in this section shall be construed to mean children of African descent. The term "white children" shall include all other children.

Section 4. The legislature shall provide for the compulsory attendance at some public school, unless other means of education are provided, of all the children in the state who are of sound mind and body, between the ages of eight and sixteen years, for at least three months in each year.

Section 5. The supervision of instruction in the public schools shall be vested in a board of education, whose powers and duties shall be prescribed by law. The superintendent of public instruction shall be president of this board. Until otherwise provided by law, the governor, secretary of state and attorney general shall be ex-officio members, and with the superintendent compose the board of education.



Section 6. The legislature shall provide for a uniform system of text books for the common schools of the state.

Section 7. The legislature shall provide for the teaching of the elements of agriculture, horticulture, stock feeding and domestic science in the common schools of the state.

The constitutional convention divided the state into 75 counties, of which 41 were in the eastern part formerly known as Indian Territory. As we have seen, these 41 counties had no schools for white children outside the municipalities which had reached over 200 population. The newly elected county superintendents in these counties were instructed by the state superintendent to divide these counties into school districts and call for an election of school boards.

Now it is interesting to recall that at this same time a more or less complete system of schools was in operation in this very section, under the supervision of the general superintendent of Indian schools. During the first year of statehood the reports<sup>I</sup> of this office show that a total of 1421 day schools were maintained. Of these 357 were supported by tribal funds, 865 from the congressional appropriation and 199 from "surplus court fees". These schools accommodated 12,765 Indians, 54,853 whites, and 11,550 negroes, or a total of 79,174 pupils. Since there had been no rural schools in the eastern section up to this time, these day schools were particularly welcome. Naturally a little friction arose between the local boards under the government-Indian system and the newly elected district

I. Report of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes, 1908, p 66.





boards under the new state system, which from now on should control. Very soon, however, all such differences were settled and a spirit of co-operation seemed to prevail which is to be commended. The supervisors of the Indian schools permitted county superintendents to have access to their records in the work of organization.<sup>I</sup> With the right to levy taxes in rural communities, a marvellous activity for building was at once manifest. The first state superintendent reports that over 2800 district school buildings were erected during the first two years of statehood.

Many were of the opinion that now the state could manage its own schools without any further appropriation from the federal government, but this was not in the least true. The resources of these new districts were exhausted by the time their buildings were raised. Owing to the amount of non-taxable Indian lands, they would have nothing left for the maintainance of these schools. Now the government was responsible primarily for the welfare of the many Indian children, but also dared not neglect the children of the whites who found themselves powerless to raise sufficient funds because of the government mandate that Indian lands dare not be taxed. We find then the most interesting situation of control passing from the government to the state, but where it is still necessary for a definite system of congressional appropriations to be made, in order that the system outlined by the state might be adequately maintained.

Gradually since that time the government educational



force has been diminished, and the efforts of those who remain are directed toward encouraging Indians to attend the public schools and extending support to such schools as could not conduct a sufficient term otherwise. In extending such aid the government officers avoid all attempts to influence in any way the internal administration of the schools, leaving all such questions to the state. We have seen that the Oklahoma constitution placed the Indian on an equal status with the white so far as education is concerned and the attendance of Indians and whites at the same school is being encouraged. The Indian children seem to be overcoming their natural timidity and in accomplishment compare favorably with their pale-face school mates. Such things are noticed and commented on by the government officials who contend that "the public school is the best way out for the Indian".<sup>I</sup>

In 1913 the annual appropriation of \$300,000.00, which had been discontinued pending an investigation by the supreme court, was re-established. Aid to the day schools which were attended by Indians was at once continued. Incorporated towns and cities were not aided except by a comparatively small per capita payment, but many other district terms were extended from two or four months to seven months. Gradually now as allotments are completed and Indian lands are included in the tax lists, the congressional appropriation will be withdrawn.

The Indian boarding schools, supervised by the government and maintained entirely by tribal trust funds, have

I. Report of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes, 1911, p 84.





been improved and are being continued. Just what the ultimate fate of these institutions will be it is interesting to conjecture. It would be comparatively easy to establish them on permanent foundations held in trust by the government. However, as the Indians become more fully amalgamated there will be no necessity for separate Indian schools as such. A tabulated list showing the status of these schools in June 1913 follows.

<u>I</u> <u>Schools.</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Att.</u>	<u>Net</u> <u>Expenditure.</u>
Choctaw Nation-			
Armstrong Male Academy	120	104	423,511.15
Jones Male Academy	175	95	20,753.30
Wheelock Female Acad.	89	82	19,790.46
Tuskahoma Female Acad.	148	107	19,953.05
Chickasaw Nation-			
Bloomfield Seminary	98	71	14,916.82
Collins Institute	73	47	14,344.99
Seminole Nation-			
Mokuskey Academy	110	83	17,267.68
Creek Nation-			
Euchee Boarding School	150	103	24,302.76
Bufaula " "	109	80	17,565.90
Muyaka " "	116	76	16,724.01
Tallahassee "	97	75	12,496.67
Cherokee Nation-			
Cherokee Orphan School	<u>71</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>16,169.19</u>
Total	1354	999	429,315.98

I. Report of Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes, June, 30, 1911, p 85.



In turning our attention to the education of the state as a whole during this period, we would naturally expect a continuation of the policies inaugurated by the territorial laws, based on the provisions of the enabling act and the new constitution. The first legislature placed the management of all school funds and lands in the hands of the Commissioners of the Land Office,<sup>I</sup> composed of the governor, secretary of state, state auditor, president of the board of agriculture and the state superintendent. Full details were given as to the security and loaning of the funds. The apportionment of the proceeds of this fund was to be made on the basis of the enumeration of children of school age, the commissioners to make all regulations. Income from the grant of section<sup>13</sup><sub>^</sub> was apportioned among the various institutions as follows: The one third granted to the University and the University Preparatory School at Tonkawa was apportioned  $5/8$  to the University and  $3/8$  to the preparatory school. The one third granted to the agricultural schools was apportioned  $1/10$  to the Colored A. and M. school at Langston, and  $9/10$  to the A. and M. College at Stillwater. The one third granted to the normal schools was apportioned equally among them.

Some slight changes were made in the laws for the common schools up to the session of 1915,<sup>2</sup> when a completely revised general code of school law was presented by the state superintendent and passed by the legislature. Many of the laws already referred to are embodied in this code and the laws are

1. Snyder, Compiled Laws of Oklahoma, Chap. 101.

2. Laws of Oklahoma, Session of 1913.





grouped under the following headings: State Superintendent, County Superintendents, District Schools, Joint Districts, District Officers-Meetings-Finances, Independent Districts-Cities and Towns, Consolidated Districts, Union Graded Schools, Scholastic Census, Agricultural and Industrial Education, Normal Institutes and Teachers' Training Courses, Kindergartens, Compulsory Education, Examination of Teachers, Separate Schools for Races, Transfer of Pupils to other Schools, Miscellaneous. Without making a complete analysis of this code, it appears that for the most part it is a compilation of laws previously in force. Where changes have been made they are comparatively unimportant. Some, however, are arousing considerable discussion and may need revision at the next session of the legislature.

The number of additional state institutions founded by the new state at once attracts our attention. We have seen that seven state schools had been established under territorial laws, the University, the University Preparatory School, three Normals and two Agricultural Colleges. Naturally these were all in the western part of the state, so the equivalent of such institutions were demanded in the east. In response to this demand, an eastern Preparatory School was established at Claremore, and three state normals, the Northwestern at Tahlequah, the East Central at Ada and the Southwestern at Durant. For the first \$45,000.00 was appropriated to purchase the Cherokee Female Seminary building at Tahlequah, \$100,000.00 was appropriated for Ada and \$25,000.00 for Durant. The purpose



of these three schools was declared to be the same as that in founding the Central State Normal at Edmond.

A school of mines and metallurgy was located at Wilburton, for the purpose of teaching mining engineering. \$15,000.00 was appropriated. A College for Girls was located at Chickasha by an appropriation of \$100,000.00. The Panhandle Agricultural Institute for the benefit of the three counties Cimarron, Texas and Beaver was established, appropriating \$12,000.00 for buildings, \$5,000.00 for maintainance for the year ending 1910, and \$7000.00 for the year ending in 1911. This school was to be of secondary grade and located on 80 acres of land. \$50,000.00 was appropriated for a school for the deaf located at Sulphur; nor were the colored deaf, blind and orphans neglected for we find an appropriation of \$35,000.00 for a school to be located at Taft.

During the extraordinary session of 1910, appropri-  
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tions were made to the following schools.

School for the Blind at Fort Gibson,	\$20,000.00
Southwestern State Normal,	10,000.00
Southeastern State Normal,	10,000.00
Eastern Preparatory School,	36,000.00
College for Girls,	39,000.00
School for the Deaf at Sulphur,	100,000.00
Colored School for Deaf, Blind & Orphans,	35,000.00
East Central State Normal,	63,096.00

I. Laws of Oklahoma, 1910.





During the entire period of statehood the number of state institutions increased from seven to twenty-five, located in every section of the state. The educational legislation of the last two sessions, 1910-11 and 1913, concerns itself largely with appropriations for these schools. To better understand the magnitude of keeping up such a system, we have listed the appropriations for these two sessions in the following table: . . .









<u>School</u>	<u>Appropriations</u> <u>1910-11</u>
University of Oklahoma, Norman.	77,289.35 125,000.00 150,000.00 150,000.00
-----	
Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater.	34,676.49 170,950.00 112,500.00 127,500.00
-----	
Colored Agricultural and Normal School, Langston.	5,200.00
-----	
Murry Agricultural School, Tishomingo.	14,570.00
-----	
Connors Agricultural School, Goodwell.	
-----	
Panhandle Agricultural School, Goodwell.	
-----	
Cameron Agricultural School, Lawton.	
-----	
Connell Agricultural School, Helena.	

I. Laws of Oklahoma, Sessions of 1910-11 and 1913,  
Index under Schools and Appropriations.

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Appropriations</u> <u>1913.</u>	<u>Purpose.</u>
Buildings. New Law Building. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	\$150,000.00 6,000.00 100,000.00 7,500.00 7,500.00 13,950.00 35,000.00	S. and M. 1914 S. and M. (Sec 36) S. and M. 1915. Extension Work 1914. Extension Work 1915. Repairs. Heat and Power Plant.
-----		
Buildings. Buildings. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	112,000.00 120,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
Equipment.	70,000.00 6,000.00	S. and M. 1914-15. Enlarging and Repairs.
-----		
Building.	15,000.00 14,000.00	S. and M. 1915. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
Buildings.	13,000.00 13,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
	28,500.00 14,000.00 14,000.00	Building and Equipment S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
	14,000.00 14,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
	14,000.00 14,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.

Note:- "S. and M." signifies Support and Maintenance.









I <u>School</u>		<u>Appropriations</u> <u>1910-11</u>
State School for the Blind, Muskogee.		\$ 30,000.00 30,000.00
-----		
Central State Normal, Edmond.		7,800.00 25,000.00 45,000.00 45,000.00
-----		
Northwestern State Normal, Alva.		6,951.22 40,000.00 40,000.00
-----		
Southwestern State Normal, Weatherford.		4,363.05 15,000.00 40,000.00 40,000.00
-----		
Northeastern State Normal, Tahlequah.		3,376.25 30,000.00 30,000.00
-----		
East Central State Normal, Ada.		2,315.00 30,000.00 30,000.00
-----		
Southwestern State Normal, Durant.		14,903.98 3,172.53 30,000.00 30,000.00
-----		
University Preparatory School, Tonkawa.		35,000.00 35,000.00

I. Laws of Oklahoma, Sessions of 1910-11 and 1913,  
See Index under "Schools" and "Appropriations".

<u>Purpose.</u>	<u>Appropriations</u> <u>1913.</u>	<u>Purpose.</u>
S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	\$ 35,000.00 37,000.00 35,000.00	Building and Heating. S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913. Buildings.	42,000.00 42,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	22,500.00 22,500.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
Deficiencies. Equipment. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	22,500.00 22,500.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	22,845.00 22,845.00 4,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915. Heat and Repairs.
-----		
Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	28,500.00 28,500.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----		
Deficiencies. Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	23,500.00 25,500.00 3,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915. Furnace.
-----		
S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	25,000.00 25,000.00	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.

Note:- "S. and M." signifies Support and Maintenance.









<u>I</u> <u>School</u>	<u>Appropriations</u> <u>1910-11</u>
Eastern University Preparatory School, Claremore.	\$ 11,450.00 30,000.00 30,000.00
-----	-----
Industrial College for Girls, Chickasha.	5,800.00 4,285.00 30,000.00 30,000.00
-----	-----
Institution for Feeble Minded, Enid.	6,000.00 25,200.00 20,000.00 155,000.00
-----	-----
Colored School for Orphans, Blind and Deaf, Taft.	21,680.75 29,800.00
-----	-----
State School for the Deaf, Sulphur.	10,000.00 135,000.00 50,000.00 50,000.00
-----	-----
State School of Mines, Wilburton.	65,000.00 25,000.00 25,000.00
-----	-----
State Orphan Home, Pryor.	113,730.00 54,000.00 50,000.00
-----	-----
State Training School for Boys, Pauls Valley.	78,000.00 22,750.00 22,750.00

<u>Purpose.</u>	<u>Appropriations</u> <u>1915.</u>	<u>Purpose.</u>
Equipment. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	\$ 22,200.00 22,200.00 1,687.53	S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915. Deficiencies.
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Improvements. Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	50,000.00 67,200.00 21.72	Heat and Dormitory. S. and M. 1914-15. "Expenses".
-----	-----	-----
Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913. Building and Equipment.		
-----	-----	-----
Deficiencies. S. and M. 1912-13.	6,000.00* 43,332.00	Deficiencies. S. and M. 1914-15.
-----	-----	-----
Deficiencies. Buildings. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	60,000.00 59,100.00 50,185.00	Buildings. S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
-----	-----	-----
Buildings. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	4,868.99 24,250.00 24,250.00	Deficiencies. Land. S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
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Buildings. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.	12,644.93 1,731.00 41,300.00 41,500.00	Deficiencies. Land. S. and M. 1914. S. and M. 1915.
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Buildings. S. and M. 1912. S. and M. 1913.		

\* Approximate.

I. Laws of Oklahoma, Sessions of 1910-11 and 1913, See Index under "Schools" and "Appropriations".

Note:- "S. and M." signifies Support and Maintenance.



In addition to the above appropriations from the general treasury of the state, the apportionments of the income of the "Section 13 fund" and the "new College fund" were made during the same time as follows:

Section 13 Fund.

School.	1910-11.	1913.
University	\$21,731.25	\$67,500.00
Prep. School (Tonkawa)	13,038.75	40,500.00
A. and M. College	31,293.00	97,200.00
Col. A. and M. School	3,474.00	10,800.00
Normals (each)	5,795.00	18,000.00

New College Fund.

University	19,000.00	19,500.00
Prep. School (Tonkawa)	10,500.00	5,500.00
A. and M. College	19,750.00	8,750.00
Col. A. and M. School	6,750.00	3,300.00
Normals (each)	1,500.00	1,500.00

Even a superficial comparison of the amounts derived from the permanent school funds and lands with the general appropriations necessary for maintainance would reveal the fact that these schools are, and will continue to remain, a very heavy burden to the taxpayers of the state.

We have said that the last two sessions of the state legislature passed a great many appropriation bills in support of the state schools. However there was other educational

I. Laws of Oklahoma, Sessions 1910-11 and 1913.  
See Index under "Appropriations".







legislation during this period and particularly in the later sessions, which assumes great importance in a consideration of Oklahoma's school system. The first state legislature provided for a text book commission, composed of the governor and six others appointed by him, who were to make the adoption of text books for five year periods. City districts were limited in the amount of their levy to five mills, unless submitted to a vote of the people. An excise board in each county, composed of the county clerk, county treasurer, county Judge, county superintendent and county attorney, may review the levy and make such changes as they desire after a thorough canvass of the annual budget. This law has made considerable trouble in the cities, for it practically robs the board of education of its power in making a levy.

During the session of 1910-11, in addition to the appropriations listed in the above table, we find the following: Chapter 142 makes an appropriation of \$5000.00 for the purpose of erecting a statue of Sequoyah, the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet, at Washington. Chap. 139, allows the county superintendent to hire one assistant at \$50.00 per month and allows expenses for only one visit to each school per year. Chap. 47 contains an act to establish a state board of education, and here we find one of the most radical departures. The board shall consist of seven members, including the state superintendent, who shall be president of the board, and six others appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate, for a term of six years. The board of education created



by this act became the legal successor of fourteen other boards of regents in the state, including the text book commission, and controls all state institutions except the agricultural schools, which are still under the control of the state board of agriculture.

Chap. 131 established the office of state inspector of schools fixing the salary at \$1000.00 and expenses. The inspector is to visit the rural, town and city schools in the state, advise with school officials and make reports to the state superintendent, by whom he is appointed. Chap. 112 contains an act creating a fund for the encouragement and support of consolidated schools in the state. All proceeds from the sale or lease of sections 33 in Greer county are to make up this fund. Any consolidated school, which is maintained for not less than six months in the year, employs at least three teachers, has not fewer than 130 scholastic pupils residing in the district, has a comfortable school building of not less than three rooms and has furnished free transportation where this was necessary, may draw from the fund one half the cost of their building. This amount dare not exceed \$2500.00 for any one district. Chap. 95 provides that the state board of affairs shall make an estimate of the needs of the state schools prior to each session of the legislature. This is now listed among the duties of the new state board of education. Chap 122 provides for the transportation of all children in consolidated districts who live over 1½ miles from the school.





During the session of 1913, in addition to the appropriation bills, we find the following: Chap. 37 locates the school for the blind permanently at Muskogee, which was formerly at Fort Gibson. Chap. 15 appropriates \$100,000.00 from the newly created Union Consolidated School District Fund, and places it in the hands of the state superintendent for immediate use. (So far the land had not yet been sold) Chap. 81 abolished county high schools and provided for the disposal of the property by a vote of the people. Chap. 111 appropriated \$10,000.00 for the support and maintenance of the Cornish Orphan Home, a private institution, for the years 1914-15. Chap. 101 contains an act "making available" the "New College" and "Section 13" funds to the state institutions to be benefited by these grants. Chap. 92 contains an act prohibiting high school fraternities, sororities, or other secret organizations. Penalties on the pupils, may be suspension or expulsion; on members of the board of education, a fine of \$25.00 to \$100.00; on such as encourage these organizations, a fine of \$25.00 to \$500.00. Chap. 202 appropriates \$10,000.00 for the proper education and care of wayward and incorrigible girls.

We have briefly examined the greater part of all educational legislation passed during the statehood period. These laws in general follow along the same lines that we noticed in connection with territorial legislation. However, since the later laws in nearly every case carry repealing measures of all conflicting legislation, they naturally become



the foundation of the present system. All earlier laws now become significant only as a means of tracing tendencies.

In summarizing the legislation of this period then, we can distinguish the following elements as contributing largely toward making up the Oklahoma system:

1. A large permanent school fund; money and land estimated at a value of \$40,000,000.00.

2. The ordinary state and county organization, consisting of a state superintendent, state board of education, county superintendents and local boards; also independent city districts.

3. A highly centralized authority vested in the state board of education, which has absolute control of the entire state system.

4. An elaborate system of twenty-five state institutions made up of the following units: One state university, six state normal schools, two agricultural colleges (white and colored), six district agricultural schools of secondary grade, two university preparatory schools, one school of mines, one industrial college for girls, school for the deaf, school for the blind, school for the feeble minded, reform school for boys, and two orphan homes (white and colored).

5. Compulsory laws operative between the ages of eight and sixteen, of which the time of attendance was recently increased from three to six months per year.

6. A number of successfully operated consolidated schools, which receive aid from the state, based on a separate land grant.





7. A unified system of text books, course of study, and movements to standardize and classify all high schools, normal schools, colleges and universities in the state by state inspection and supervision.

8. A system of federal aid to districts in the eastern part of the state, because of the loss to such districts arising from non-taxable Indian lands.



### General Discussion.

We have thus far discovered certain definite elements in the development of the schools of Oklahoma which assume great prominence when one attempts to form some estimate of the total worth of the system. Consequently it now becomes necessary to discuss each of these in the light of present day criticism, arriving at a conclusion as to whether certain practices are now in successful operation, and whether or not the original intent or purpose is being realized. We shall take up the discussion of these topics in the order in which they are listed in the preceeding section.

#### The Permanent School Fund.

Under this topic we shall also discuss all other means of support of the schools. The exact status of the permanent school fund at present may be derived from the following tables:

##### I. Lands granted or set aside for school purposes-

Common School, sections 16 & 36	1,415,000 Acres
State School, Sec. 13 & Indemnity	350,000 "
State School, "New College"	1,050,000 "
Sec. 35, Greer Co. (Consolidated fund)	<u>40,480</u> "
Total	2,855,480 "
2. Amount of Land already sold	<u>1,203,006</u> "
3. Amount of Land unsold	1,652,474 "

I. Wilson, R. H., "Sources from which Public School Funds are Derived", Bulletin, 1914.





4. Proceeds from Land Sold	\$9,011,562.15
5. Cash Grant by Congress	5,000,000.00

The unsold lands are leased and the money is loaned. All proceeds are apportioned annually. In addition to this apportionment, funds are derived from the following sources:

1. A state tax of  $\frac{1}{4}$  mill for common schools.

(Amounting in 1913 to \$140,735.17)

2. All of the Income Tax.

3. A county levy for common schools.

4. A district tax.

5. Non-resident tuition charges.

A statement of all receipts for school purposes during the past year is as follows:

Income from common school lands	\$624,034.83
Income from \$5,000,000.00 fund (farm loans)	242,646.97
Income from Sec. 33, Greer County	13,900.17
Income from state tax	140,735.17
Income from Inheritance tax	9,342.49
Income from County tax	126,796.85
Income from <u>District Tax</u>	5,702,052.81
Income from sale of bonds	933,574.57
Income from tuition and other sources	554,502.40
Rental from state school lands	<u>224,145.03</u>
Total	\$8,571,704.29

There seems to be no disposition to retain the unsold land; on the contrary, the agents of the State Land Commission are continually at work selling school land, except where there



is prospect of oil or gas. The following recent clipping is interesting in this connection.

"ARAPAH0, Okla., July 22.--(Special)-- During the sale of school land in progress here, 13,840 acres of land were disposed of by Wednesday noon. Tuesday, the first day of the sale, 960 acres of the school land was refused at the appraised valuation by lessees who have preferential rights in the bidding, and Wednesday, 1,660 acres of land was refused by lessees. The land sold brought \$125,500.00, being \$620.00 above the appraised valuation. R. E. Wood, agent for the state, conducted the sale and will go from here to Washita county for the purpose of selling school land there."

Essentially two things interest us here. Land refused by the lessees at the appraised value is being sold to others, and the land is sold above the appraised value. This would indicate that the state land department is aware of the value of this land to the boys and girls of the state. Another reference in the same publication a few days later indicates that there is an association of school land lessees organized, who are bringing all possible political influence into play to force the immediate sale of school lands; the inference being that they procure it at their own figure on the plea that they have made it valuable by their improvements.

An immediate sale of all the land appears unwise when we consider the inevitable rise in valuation that must come. On the other hand, the lessees have some right to be heard. Then too, a small amount now may be of more real worth in encouraging education than a larger amount later to maintain a system already established. There is another point to be remembered in the fact that this land becomes taxable for school

I. Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, July 23, 1914.





purposes immediately after the sale, which will increase taxable values in the various districts. However, under the present law, the disposition of this land is rather a cumbersome process and this alone may serve to prevent any undue haste.

A very significant question, always, in connection with a permanent school fund of any great proportions, is the effect on local taxation. In the <sup>first</sup> bursts of enthusiasm over the various land grants, we find some statements to the effect that local taxation would be greatly reduced. The first state superintendent estimated that the schools could be run for from <sup>four to</sup> six months on the apportionment alone. <sup>I</sup> In general, however, we find little if any disposition to depend unduly on the state apportionment. A glance at the amount raised from the various sources during the past four years proves this quite conclusively.

<u>Year.</u>	<u>State Apportionment.</u>	<u>District Taxation.</u>	<u>Receipts, Other Sources.</u>
1910	\$ 770,010.50	\$4,323,640.11	\$4,130,942.23
1911	742,310.75	3,504,162.88	3,789,451.89
1912	970,526.21	4,986,576.53	4,299,455.49
1913	1,070,447.55	5,702,052.81	2,822,083.07

The column "other sources" is largely made up from the sale of bonds which of course fall back on the district for settlement. Consequently, in estimating the effect of the state apportionment on local interest, we feel fairly well justified in comparing column I with the sum of columns 2 and 3. Roughly this would place the per cent of the total school expenditure con-

1. Third Biennial Report, Dept. of Educ., p 16.

2. Wilson, R. H., "Progress of our Schools, 1913, p 5.



tributed by the state at from ten to fifteen per cent.

It is even a matter of some complaint on the part of the people that cities of the first class are limited to a five mill levy, and it is thought that this limit will be removed soon. In passing through the state one is impressed with the splendid school buildings erected in every village or city. The buildings were erected with money obtained from the sale of bonds, and the district will always need to levy a sufficient tax to keep up the interest on these bonds, in addition to maintaining the school more or less demanded by their physical equipment.

We conclude then that the disposition made of the state school funds does not react on local interest in education at least not to the extent of interfering in any way with the inclination of the people to tax themselves directly for the generous support of the public schools.

#### State, County and District Organization.

With the usual organization of state and county superintendents elected by the people, we of course expect to find unfortunate political interference with the professional conduct of the schools. Conditions in Oklahoma are probably no improvement over those of any other state in this particular. The very law prohibiting a county superintendent from acting in the capacity of conductor of the teachers' institute in his own or any other county, unless he secures a conductor's certificate based on qualifications, would indicate that it





was expected the county superintendent would be more political than professional. In the period of organization, however, these county superintendents have done a tremendous amount of good work. When we consider that the 41 eastern counties all needed to be divided into districts immediately following statehood, we can appreciate the great amount of work to be done. Just how well this has been done it is still too early to estimate. As the general movement to improve rural conditions proceeds, this will be made more or less clear.

The city districts, being independent, at once forged ahead and we find city systems on the whole in advance of those of many older communities. The excise board, previously referred to, is a cause of continual anxiety on the part of city boards. The school budget and levy must come before this board for final judgment. Under the law they have the right to adjust the levy to meet conditions; to raise or lower the levy of the board of education as they may see fit. Now it may be best to have some check on the city board of education, but it is felt that the city board is nevertheless best qualified to judge as to the amounts necessary for the proper maintenance of the schools, and should have the power to make the necessary levies. During the summer of 1913 tremendous pressure was brought to bear on the excise board of Oklahoma county to cut the estimate of the Oklahoma City board of education at least \$25,000.00 without any particular reference to the budget. Since the monthly payroll of the city district averages about \$28,000.00, this would simply have meant an eight month's school if the cut had been made.



Under the new school code the number of members of city boards is being decreased. Cities establishing the commission form of government are also reducing membership on these boards. This tendency is favorable to a more direct and business-like administration of school affairs.

#### The State Board of Education.

The bill, approved March 6, 1911, which brought the present state board of education into existence, made it the legal successor to fourteen various boards in the state, and defined its duties as follows:

(a) The general supervision of the schools of the state.

(b) To formulate and adopt courses of study for the common schools and county normal institutes, and arrange courses of study and adopt text books for use in the higher educational institutions of the state.

(c) To formulate rules and regulations governing the issuance of all certificates to teach in the public schools of this state.

(d) To prepare questions for the examination of applicants for county and city certificates to teach in the public schools of the state.

(e) To examine applicants for state certificates to teach in the public schools of the state, and for conductors' and instructors' certificates to teach in the county normal institutes.

(f) To prepare examination questions for graduates from the eighth grade of the public schools.





(g) To classify the public schools of the state and properly accredit them to the higher educational institutions of the state.

(h) To formulate and adopt courses of study for state pupils' reading circles and for state teachers' reading circles, and to prepare questions for the issuance of reading circle certificates.

(i) The state board of education shall make a biennial report to the governor and the legislature, setting forth the work of the board and the condition of the schools of the state. The board shall also prepare and submit to the governor thirty days before the convening of each regular session of the legislature a budget estimating the necessary appropriations for each of the institutions under their management and control.

(j) (A statement of relation toward private commercial schools--seeking to extend state co-operation to, and supervision over such schools.)

One is at once impressed with the radical step in the direction of centralization of authority and supervision in the creation of this board. The bill was supported by practically everyone; politicians and professional men both arguing for it. The career of this board, though short, has been checkered, but dynamic. Their greatest difficulties have arisen through differences with the governor regarding the appointments and removals in the state schools, and in the adoption of text books. The first called for an investigation conducted by the governor, and the second resulted in the



attempted removal of certain members from the board and appointment of others, and ultimately in the delaying of the state adoption for two years. A synopsis of the history of this adoption follows.

The regularly appointed board met July 29, 1912 to make the adoption. The governor considered the time inopportune and issued an order at 9:00 A. M. removing three members. This was served on the members about half an hour later, but in the meantime an adoption was voted. The other three members retired voluntarily, though the governor asked some to retain their places. The governor then called the senate in extra session to confirm his appointment. They refused to confirm any of the former board but agreed to new appointees which the governor presented. The new board at their first meeting rejected the "1912 adoption" and advertised for new bids. Wheeler & Company for the book companies, carried the matter to the supreme court in an attempt to enforce the contracts of the old board which the governor, of course, had refused to sign. While the matter was pending, the governor left the state for a few hours, during which time the lieutenant governor signed the contracts of the book companies. Governor Cruce returned hastily and condemned the action of the lieutenant governor. The book companies now brought suit in the district court to enforce their contracts and were upheld. In an appeal before the supreme court the new board was once more sustained and proceeded to lay plans for the new adoption.

I. Daily Oklahoman, Okla. City, Jan. 4, 1914.





The new adoption was completed in May, 1914, and will go into effect August 1, 1914.

Now it should be apparent to such as argue against a central board because of the text book irregularities, that the old text book commission would be subject to the same errors. It is beyond doubt a great advantage to the public to be able to fix responsibility on a single board of seven, headed by the state superintendent, rather than on a collection of fourteen boards as before. It is pretty generally believed that the state board of agriculture has no particular reason for existence and that the agricultural schools should also be under the control of the general board.

Be that as it may, there is certainly plenty of justification for the establishment of such a board in the constructive work it has done, and but for the time consumed in the needless prolongation of the text book fight this would be all the more apparent. Where before there was wasteful competition between state institutions, a considerable spirit of co-operation has developed. There has been a serious attempt made to determine the place of each institution in the entire scheme. Great advance has been made in the classifying and accrediting of the various high schools and in raising the standards of teachers.

The authority of this board is almost absolute. If we as present day educators and administrators are correct in advocating centralization of powers at all, Oklahoma has a good law. However I feel that the members of such a board should



have exceptionally high qualifications. The law provides that at least two of the six appointed members shall be practical school men; aside from that the governor is free to appoint whom he may. The idea seems to prevail that at least half of the board shall consist of successful business men. Many of the difficulties of the board have been due to the absence of that high professional standard, which would come with a membership whose qualifications were entirely in keeping with its responsibilities. The weakness is pretty liable to be in the character of the board and not in the idea of centralization of power.

#### The State Schools.

In the establishment and maintainance of its twenty-five state institutions Oklahoma has one of its largest problems. Every state must take care of its unfortunates, the deaf, the blind, the orphans, the feeble minded and the incorrigibles. Similarly, every state feels justified in maintaining a university, an agricultural college and such facilities as may be necessary for the training of teachers. But in the founding of six normal schools, six district agricultural schools, two college preparatory schools and an industrial college for girls, the legislature faces the problem of making explanations to the tax-paying public at each biennial session. We noted that three normal schools were established by the territory of Oklahoma; the other three were established on the eastern side of the state in an attempt to equalize facilities in all sections. However it is interesting to recall that the Oklahoma normals did not supply the need when 2800 new districts were organized in 1908. Teachers came from every state in the union





in response to the most urgent calls sent out through the public press. At present most of the best teachers in Oklahoma owe little or nothing to the state normals. It is also true that the normal schools of the neighboring states would gladly have trained the Oklahoma teachers for a few years longer, until it had been determined just what the need of the new state would be. The question of proximity is of little importance where transportation facilities are good.

Further, whatever need there may have been for preparatory schools a few years ago, there should be none now when there is a splendid high school in every community. There is no reason why every community should not be expected to provide secondary education without state aid. The towns in which the normals and preparatory schools are located do not support high schools but send their children to the state school for their secondary education. Naturally these localities bitterly oppose any movement to cut down the number of state schools.

In the face of the enormous appropriations asked for at the last legislative session, there was a very determined effort to eliminate certain state schools. It is singular that the arguments in favor of maintaining all of the schools were exceedingly weak, and yet none were eliminated. Members simply took a personal attitude of defense regarding the school located in their particular representative districts and agreed to stand by each other in maintaining them all. The real problem of working out the best solution for the state as a whole was



scarcely touched in the whole discussion. It is truly unfortunate when the question of properly maintaining the great educational institutions of a commonwealth is hopelessly entangled with the aspirations of cheap politicians.

On the other hand, however, there seems to be a wonderful increase in the attendance at these schools, more particularly the normals and the university. Following is the enrollment for the past year and at the present summer session in each of the normals and the two preparatory schools. The summer work is divided into two courses; a short four weeks course allowing no credit, and a ten weeks course leading to a diploma. We will indicate the numbers enrolled in each of these courses also.

<u>School.</u>	<u>I</u> <u>During</u> <u>Year.</u>	<u>Summer</u> <u>Session.</u>	<u>10 Weeks</u> <u>Course.</u>	<u>4 Weeks</u> <u>Course.</u>
Edmond	1,012	1560	1410	150
Alva	527	480	451	150
Ada	362	618	515	103
Tahlequah	293	728	457	252
Weatherford	285	401	351	50
Durant	287	306	457	79
Tonkawa Prep. Sch.	507	286	241	45
Claremore, , ,	<u>261</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>32</u>
Total	3534	4500	3745	695

It will be seen that most of the summer students are doing credit work and aiming toward diplomas. When we consider that a large number of these are school teachers at work all over the state, such a report is encouraging.

I. Reported by State Supt. Daily Oklahoman, June 8, 14





In the process of elimination of state institutions there would be great waste, even if such a thing were possible from the political standpoint. So, if such a plan seems impossible or inadvisable, it were well to compel these various schools to give the best possible service to the state. In my opinion the best way to accomplish this is to make certain institutions responsible for certain sections, and eliminate competition by confining them strictly to their own localities. With the equality as regards facilities and equipment, which is possible under the strong central scheme such as we have, such a plan should be feasible.

Then, finally, if we were to actually compare the appropriations made by a single session of the legislature for school purposes with appropriations made for other purposes, perhaps the amounts would not seem so large. The public must grow more and more accustomed to voting large sums for education, for the financial responsibilities of public education will undoubtedly grow greater instead of less.

#### Compulsory Attendance.

The degree to which universal attendance is attained in a system is commonly employed as a measure for the general efficiency of that system. The western conception of the universal extension of education not only places a school within reach of every child, but enforces attendance on that school. Compulsory attendance laws are common to all states, but in few are they really effective. A penalty must be attached before a law of this kind may have any real merit. In this



respect the Choctaw Indians had a law which seemed to fit their situation admirably,- a fine of ten cents per day for each unexcused absence. There is a fine for violation of the present state law, which as we have seen requires six months attendance for all pupils between the ages of eight and sixteen; but I feel that Oklahoma has one feature which is more effective than a rigid penalty. This feature is discovered in the willingness of the state to actually pay the price of universal education if necessary. In the case of a widowed mother, who is dependent on the earnings of a boy to support herself and younger children, no exception to the application of the compulsory law is made in the case of this boy. Then there is but one thing that in justice can be done and that is to pay the boy a scholarship approximately equal to his earning capacity, and this the state does. Such cases are rare it is true. In four years of supervisory work in the state I have only found it necessary to call for the application of this law once, but at that time the law was entirely adequate to the situation. I think the humanitarian element in the law is worth much more than it ever costs in making the whole requirement pretty generally effective.

Statistics, supplied by the state superintendent, showing the enumeration, enrollment, average daily attendance and their respective per cents for the past four years are listed in the following table...





<sup>I</sup> <u>Year.</u>	<u>Enumeration.</u>	<u>Enrolled.</u>	<u>Ave. Att.</u>	<u>% Enroll.</u>	<u>% Att.</u>
1910	515,478	415,116	236,548	82.4	56.9
1911	539,058	443,227	260,018	82.2	58.7
1912	556,818	438,901	274,694	78.8	62.3
1913	541,826	469,809	284,186	86.7	60.5

It will be seen that there is a gratifying increase in both the per cent of enrollment and the per cent of attendance in the past four years, and this in spite of the fact that the time of attendance was increased from three to six months per year.

#### Consolidated Schools.

We have reviewed in a general way the legislation affecting the joining and consolidating of districts. At first the laws were merely permissive; that is, all legal difficulties which might hinder a rural community from forming a graded or consolidated school were cleared away. However it appears that more is necessary if the rural districts are ever to take this step, and so the system of state aid has been introduced, which we have outlined. The support for these schools will be permanently available because it is based on a separate land grant.

The state board of education has been very active in urging consolidation in rural communities, and has published a very interesting and instructive bulletin on the subject.<sup>2</sup> This bulletin explains just what steps are necessary to

1. Wilson, R. H., "Progress of Our Schools", 1913, p 7
2. Rural School Consolidation, 1911.



consolidate, and under what conditions the state fund is available. It also gives accounts of such schools successfully conducted in Oklahoma and other states.

The state superintendent reports the present progress of consolidation in the state as follows:  
I.

Consolidated schools in Oklahoma	97
Schools which have received state aid	41
Amount paid consolidated schools by state	\$37,861.50
Consolidated schools applying for aid	17
Districts considering consolidation	20

The consolidated idea is pretty generally opposed by farmers. For this reason a county superintendent, who must depend on the farmer's vote, is often unable to advocate this even though he should desire to. Obviously this is the opportunity for the state board to push the matter for the whole state, through the stimulation afforded by state aid. This seems to be the policy in Oklahoma.

#### Unification, Standardization and Classification.

The shortcomings of the unified system of text books have been pretty definitely shown in the adoption troubles of the past. Moreover we often have cause to regret some of the adoptions which are made, and which we are forced to make the most of for five years. But I still feel that these are abuses of an otherwise good system. Surely there is a tremendous opportunity for good where a text book adoption is made by

I. Wilson, R. H., "Progress of Our Schools", p 4.





trained specialists, who have only the good of the boys and girls of the state at heart. The most radical advocates of individualistic education would hardly wish to contemplate a scheme of training for an entire commonwealth where common standards were not employed.

In addition to the unified text books, there is a special employee in the office of the state superintendent, the school inspector, who gives his entire time to inspection and classification of schools, particularly high schools. It is well known that high schools vary greatly, largely because of the free rein given the independent districts. Here again an official from the state office can be of greater service than the ordinary county superintendent. High school statistics have been very meagre up to the past two years, but there are enough to show a very rapid growth and also an advance in standards. Enrollment increased from 16,000 in 1913, to 25,000 in 1914; the number of graduates increased from 1080 to 2000 in the same time. The number of high schools accredited with the state university increased from 37 in 1912, to 85 in 1913, to 125 in 1914. A corresponding increase in the number of high schools affiliated with the North Central Association is noticeable. In 1911 there were 2, in 1912, 4; in 1913 14 and at present 25. Since it is well known that the N.C.A. is not urging its standards on high schools over the country, this increase can be pretty largely attributed to the general state policy of raising standards.

I. Wilson, R. H., "Progress of our Schools", p 9.



A plan of inestimable value to the rural schools is the unified course of study for the state. Rural teachers are the most inexperienced and need every possible aid. The unified course is about the only thing that could possibly operate toward unity of effort in the various rural schools.

In general too, the efforts of the state board to standardize and classify all state institutions, are having a very good effect over the state at large. The centralization of authority found in this board works directly toward this end.

#### Federal Aid.

The reasons for government aid in such sections as have large areas of non-taxable Indian lands, have been fully discussed. Here the matter only interests us as a possible indication that an enlargement of federal authority over education and a possible greater centralization of authority was in progress. I feel that, just as the state establishes a system of aid where local means fail, so the government should, even to a larger extent than before, watch closely the more general movements of education in the whole country and be ready to aid with appropriations any worthy movement which cannot be supported by the state.

The government, largely because of precedent, has not done nearly enough for eastern Oklahoma in the past years. Through the laxness of our federal authority and laws, whites were allowed to go into the Indian territory and were then left without a possibility of providing education for many years. Then it must be remembered that all education in this country





was conducted or encouraged through the bureau of Indian affairs and was not connected in any way with the bureau of education. It is to be hoped that the precedent of federal aid established in eastern Oklahoma, may be instrumental in bringing about the organization of an efficient department of education at Washington.

Such then, are the elements we have discovered in the educational system of Oklahoma, which have developed through the years, and about which the entire state policy of education seems to be grouped.



### Conclusion.

In the foregoing discussion of the various elements making up the school system of Oklahoma, we have in nearly every case found it possible to decide in favor of the established system. There are, of course, some minor points we should not approve of, but we have generally found that these were being corrected through some process of re-organization.

If we were to ask just what things a state should give most attention to in the establishment of a system of schools, we should probably list the following:

1. Support.
2. Administration.
3. The improvement of teachers.
4. The Curriculum.

As regards the first, we have noted the large permanent fund, which, however, does not seem to discourage the people in voting large amounts for school purposes.

In administration, the proper machinery has been provided all through Oklahoma's history, and the latest step in the establishment of the single, powerful state board, has placed the system among the most progressive.

If we could judge the attention to the training of teachers by the number of normal schools, all would be well. Perhaps the establishment of the institution is all we should reasonably expect of a state. That our teaching force needs





decided improvement is a fact too patent to discuss, but the facilities with which to accomplish this improvement are already quite largely provided.

In the establishment of a curriculum to really meet the needs of the state we find here, as everywhere, our greatest need. To this end the unification of text books and course of study contribute largely, but do not go the whole way. The new curriculum must have a more direct bearing on the industries of the state, and these are hardly yet fully determined.

A larger problem, perhaps, than any thus far considered is in all probability the social one. We have commented on the fact that the population of Oklahoma is made up from all states in the Union. This fact presents little that is ultimately difficult to adjust because an American is pretty largely an American wherever you find him. However Oklahoma is attempting a system of education, which contemplates on the one hand the amalgamation of the Indian through common school facilities, and on the other the segregation of the negro through separate schools. These movements have already shown a degree of success which is beyond question.

The test of any system is to be measured ultimately by the resulting citizenship. Oklahoma is still too young to be measured by this standard; but when the time for such judgment comes, I believe firmly that the educational system of Oklahoma will stand the test, even though my belief must now rest pretty largely on the present elements and tendencies to be observed.



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